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20 PAGES 150 FILL



An engine of the Indian Airlines Airbus sits close to the tail section after the crash. (Reuter wirephoto)



The remains of the Indian Airlines Airbus. (Reuter wirephoto)



Fire brigade personnel try to control the fire of the Airbus at Bangalore airport. (Reuter wirephoto)

Aoun captures LF stronghold

Death cries mingle with gunfire in devastated Beirut

BEIRUT, Feb 16, (Agencies): East Beirut shook to widespread shelling today and wounded civilians cried for help from apartment blocks set on fire by the bloodiest battle of the inter-Christian war. General Michel Aoun claimed to have scored a major victory over the Lebanese Forces (LF) militia, saying he had seized their stronghold of Ain Al-Roummaneh after two days of ferocious tank and artillery battles.

Aoun's troops were combing the area for militiamen, whose command was negotiating the terms of their surrender to Aoun's forces, the sources said.

"The militiamen wanted to hold on to their weapons, while Gen. Aoun insisted that they give up with their hands behind their heads," one source said.

The onslaught was the third against LF strongholds since fighting erupted on Jan 31 when Aoun, seeking sole control of the Christian enclave, ordered the militia to disband.

"The military operation is now in the stage of cleaning after the main military operation," Aoun said in a radio broadcast after fighting died down in Ain Al-Roummaneh.

"There are no more problems in Ain Al-Roummaneh. I can say it has been liberated from militia pressure and liberated from oppression which it has been subject to."

The loss of the district would be a major blow for the 10,000-strong LF. Aoun's forces last week overran an LF base at Dbayeh north of Beirut and fought the militia to a standstill on Qisat ridge overlooking the capital.

As dusk fell today, tank, artillery and machinegun fire broke out over the areas of East Beirut, starting fires in high-rise blocks.

Aoun's forces shelled two of the last areas controlled by the LF in East Beirut, Dora and Ashrafieh, while the militia fired on Aoun's positions in Yarzeh, Baabda and Hazmeh.

Hospitals, desperately short of bed, oxygen and bandages, crammed the wounded into emergency basement wards for safety.

Many casualties could not be rescued from the ruins of 10-storey apartment blocks in Ain Al-Roummaneh, an area of about nine square km (5.5 sq miles) which once housed 30,000 people.

"We could hear them screaming, but no one could help them and I don't know what happened to them," said George Nasir, 28, being treated in Hayek hospital for shrapnel wounds to his legs.

Radio stations carried appeals for rescue from people telephoning from burning buildings.

Aoun's artillery emplacements, targeting another stronghold of Lebanese Forces, also hit the mountaintop Notre Dame orphanage in Harissa, north of Beirut.

The orphanage called on relatives to evacuate the orphans "as soon as possible because we cannot continue providing them with our services."

"Ain Al-Roummaneh is like a cemetery hit by an earthquake," said a witness who toured the battle zone in the heart of East Beirut. Hospitals and security sources reported up to 60 dead and nearly 200 wounded in the close-quarters fighting.

Security sources said the heavily populated Ain Roummaneh neighbourhood, target of a massive bombardment by Aoun's troops since yesterday, has practically fallen.



Facing each other

Soldiers and residents of the capital of Soviet Tajikistan face each other in the down town area of Dushanbe where a state of emergency and curfew were declared as tension there continues. (Reuter wirephoto)

Quit, Tajiks ask leaders

Armenians mutilated

MOSCOW, Feb 16, (Agencies): Tajik Communist Party officials today rejected offers by the republic's leaders to resign, and the legislature formed a committee to investigate more than a dozen deaths in ethnic rioting.

Thousands of protesters yesterday defied a ban on demonstrations to demand the resignations of leaders in their Soviet Asian republic. On Wednesday, the party chief, premier and president offered to resign, but said they could not quit until the party and local Parliament released them.

The Tajik party Central Committee declined to accept the offers and decided to keep the current leadership, said Anatoly Larenok, a correspondent for the national newspaper Vozdushny transport, Russian for air transport.

Meanwhile, twelve mutilated corpses, 11 of them Armenians from a home for invalids, have been found in a sand pit in Soviet Azerbaijan, the official news agency Tass said today.

Tass did not say who was suspected of the killings. But the corpses — 11 women and one man — appeared to be victims of an ethnic conflict between Armenians and Azeris which has killed hundreds over the past two years.

Eleven were identified as handicapped Armenians who disappeared from a home for invalids

in the Azerbaijani city of Gyandzha on Jan 24, Tass said.

Residents interviewed by telephone said the streets were quiet today in Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan. Western reporters have been barred from travelling to the region.

The republic's Interior Ministry raised the death toll from 18 to 20 in the violence that began Saturday, Larenok said. An Interior Ministry spokesman said 568 people were injured, of whom 178 are hospitalised. Forty-two were arrested.

The presidium of the Tajikistan Supreme Soviet formed a special deputies commission to investigate the deaths, said Boris K. Pugo.

"The situations during the aggravation of events were complex. For example, there were many bullet wounds. But so far it's not known who was shooting and from where," Pugo told the army newspaper Red Star.

In another sign of a split at the top, Interior Minister Mamadaye Navzhuvanov called on party and government officials "to come out to the people and not hide in their offices."

Islamic fundamentalists mobbed a bus and attacked Tajik girls because their heads were uncovered, and protesters demanded a ban on the sale of pork in the mainly Sunni Muslim republic, news reports said.

UN urged to expel Tehran

LONDON, Feb 16, (Reuters): More than 200 British members of Parliament urged the United Nations today to expel Iran for what they called repressive and terrorist policies.

The group, from all of Britain's main political parties, urged UN recognition of the Iraq-based National Council of Resistance of Iran, the exiled opposition led by Mohtasham Rajavi.

A statement by the 248 politicians said the renewed death threat against British author Salman Rushdie by Iranian spiritual leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei proved "that terrorism is an inherent characteristic of the ruling regime in Iran."

The British politicians appeared to be following the lead of parliamentarians in the Council of Europe in Strasbourg who signed a similar petition on Feb 2.

They said the death threat against Rushdie, accused of blaspheming against Islam in his novel "The Satanic Verses," was "an extension of the domestic repression in Iran which has to date brought about 90,000 political executions."

Iraq will try journalist

LONDON, Feb 16, (Reuters): An Iraqi revolutionary court will try a British nurse and an Iranian-born journalist on spying charges later this month, the British Foreign Office said today.

Daphne Parish, who worked for a private hospital in Baghdad, was arrested with journalist Farzad Bazoft while he was checking reports of an explosion at a military installation south of Baghdad for Britain's Observer newspaper last year. Parish took him to the area in a hospital car.

Black box to be analysed abroad

IA chairman quits

NEW DELHI, Feb 16, (Agencies): The chairman of beleaguered Indian Airlines resigned today, saying he accepted responsibility for a recent plane crash in southern India that killed 91 people.

Prime Minister V.P. Singh said he "reluctantly" accepted the resignation of R.K. Prasad and asked the joint secretary of the Civil Aviation Ministry, P.C. Sen, to take over as managing director of the government-owned domestic carrier.

Prasad joined Indian Airlines in 1956 and took over as chairman and managing director last April. The airline has been dogged for years by complaints of frequent schedule delays and allegations of mismanagement, poor morale among staff, inadequate supervision and training of pilots and poor maintenance of planes.

Details of Prasad's resignation were not released by the government, except that he had accepted "moral responsibility" for the crash.

A three-month-old Indian Airlines Airbus 320 crashed on Wednesday about 50 yards (metres) short of the airport runway in Bangalore. The airline said 146 people were on the hourlong flight from Bombay and 55 survived.

The government has ordered an investigation into the cause of the crash. The weather was clear and there were no signs of an emergency on board, officials said.

Some Indian newspapers have speculated the crash of the sophisticated aircraft may have occurred because the pilot tried to change the mode of control from computer to manual.

Others reports have suggested the plane's instruments may have indicated the wrong height, leading the pilot to lower the plane earlier than he should have. Both the pilot and the co-pilot died in the crash.

The twin-engined, narrow-bodied jet is the first civilian airliner with a fully computerised flight control system.

Aviation Minister Arif Mohammed Khan said the plane's "black box," the digital flight data

recorder that logs all changes in altitude, speed and direction, would be sent abroad for analysis. He refused to say where it would be sent. But he said the recorder would not be sent to France, or to any other country involved in the consortium which built it.

The plane is manufactured by Airbus Industrie, a European consortium based in France. Airbus sent a team of experts to Bangalore to help in the investigation.

At least 36 foreigners were on the flight, officials said. American, Japanese, West German, British, Sudanese, Somali and French nationals were on the plane but the airline did not give complete details of nationalities.

Wednesday's crash is the second accident involving an Airbus 320 and the first of an Airbus 320 in commercial service.

Britain, West Germany and Spain as well as

List of killed - Page 2

France are partners in Airbus Industrie, the plane's builder, and aviation experts said Khan's decision left the United States as the most likely destination of the recorder.

Indian officials said the reason for not sending the recorder to any consortium member was to reassure Indian public opinion that everything was being done to find the cause of the crash impartially.

Preliminary reports on the crash show similarities to an accident involving another model in 1988, a top Indian official said today.

Provir Sen, director-general of Indian Civil Aviation, said both planes were flown by highly experienced pilots.

"Also, in both cases, the aircraft suffered a sudden loss of height," he said in an interview.

Sen said India was looking for a country other than France to decode the flight data recorder, which should yield clues to the cause of Wednesday's crash, because that was where the aircraft was assembled.

Muslim devotees fired on, two die

SRINAGAR, Feb 16, (Agencies): Security forces killed two people and wounded two today when they opened fire on anti-India demonstrators in Srinagar, and suspected Muslim secessionists shot two other men to death, police said.

The northern city has become the flashpoint of the Muslim separatist campaign in the Indian-controlled Kashmir region.

Police officials who cannot be identified under briefing rules said the paramilitary border security forces fired on about 2,000 Muslims after militants in the crowd had fired guns.

They said the crowd was staging a procession after weekly Muslim prayers in the Khanay Chowk district of Srinagar.

Police also said suspected militants fatally shot a local court clerk at his house. They said the clerk, a Muslim identified as Merajuddin Teli, was killed for being a suspected police informer.

An assistant manager of a government-run bank also was shot to death by suspected militants in downtown Haba Kadal as he was walking to his office, police said. They said it was not clear why the clerk, Anup Kumar, a Hindu, was killed.

The deaths, which occurred during a 10-hour relaxation of a 24-hour curfew, increased the overall toll to 96 people killed since Jan 20, when the latest violence in the decades-old secessionist movement flared.

The curfew was lifted today from 5 am (2330 GMT Thursday) to 3 pm (0930 GMT), allowing worshippers to attend the weekly prayers for the first time this year.

Authorities had imposed an all-day curfew every Friday for the last two months because they feared anti-India speeches in mosques could incite demonstrations. At least 50,000 people congregated for prayers at the Jama Masjid, the largest mosque in the city of one million people.

Pakistan yesterday rejected as "preposterous" claims it is fomenting a militant secessionist movement in India's troubled Jammu-Kashmir.

Foreign Secretary Tavir Ahmed showed reporters a 26-page dossier of Indian charges against Pakistan and said: "This document is preposterous, ridiculous and a tissue of lies."

Health charges

Insurance proposed

By Nash't Al Agha

THE Ministry of Health has concluded that it is impossible to continue with the free medical health services and it is now imperative that the health insurance scheme be introduced.

Speaking to the Seyssah, Planning Minister and acting Public Health Minister, Abdul Rahman Al Awadi said that the nineties will witness both a qualitative and quantum leap in the level of medical services provided by the state and these could only be effectively translated through the individual participation and involvement of the beneficiaries of these services.

Commenting on the leading medical issue Aids, the official said that no full-fledged Aids cases have been discovered in the country.

Law may stop Aids deportation

By Diana Abou Haidar

INDIVIDUALS living and working in Kuwait who test positive for the Aids virus will not be deported, according to the new law on Aids that is expected to be passed by the Cabinet in a few weeks, according to Dr Hussain Al Momen, head of the Kuwait Third International Conference on Aids press committee.

Momen said that 55 cases of infection with the virus have been identified in Kuwait. Seven of those were Kuwaitis and the rest were non-Kuwaitis.

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Details inside page

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Weather

FAJR: Weather with slight to moderate north westerly wind.

State of sea: Moderate

High water: 3.00 am, 3.30 pm

Low water: 7.30 am, 10.00 pm

Sunrise: 6.34 am

Sunset: 5.32 pm

Maximum temperatures recorded:

Kuwait: 29°C 86°F

Amman: 19°C 66°F

Falaka: 19°C 66°F

Minimum temperatures recorded:

Kuwait: 9°C 48°F

Amman: 11°C 52°F

Falaka: 11°C 52°F

Maximum temperatures expected:

Kuwait: 21°C 70°F

Amman: 20°C 68°F

Falaka: 20°C 68°F

Minimum humidity recorded:

Kuwait: 65 per cent

Amman: 60 per cent

Falaka: 54 per cent

Tehran blasts West on Rushdie

NICOSIA, Feb 16, (Agencies): Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani today called the order to kill author Salman Rushdie an exclusively Islamic issue and condemned the uproar it sparked, Tehran radio reported.

"The Imam's sentence on the apostate writer of 'The Satanic Verses' is an opinion of Islamic expertise and there is no need for the kind of ruckus that has been raised by the enemies of Islam," Rafsanjani said in a sermon.

While radical Iranian leaders have been trying to get media attention by highlighting the Rushdie affair for the past week, Rafsanjani appeared to be trying to play it down.

"If they (the West) deal with the issue logically, the result will be that the Imam's sentence will be regarded as an issue of Islamic expertise, not anything else."

"If an expert offers his opinion about an issue, it should not need (to produce) such a scandal," the radio quoted Rafsanjani as saying in his sermon on the Tehran University campus.

He said the reason for the media attention over the Rushdie affair for the past week, Rafsanjani appeared to be trying to play it down.

"The contents of 'The Satanic Verses' are not just those of a normal book, which can be related to freedom of speech," the radio quoted him as saying.

"This blasphemous book is an insulting attack on Islamic sanctities, and the penalty for an offensive, abusive person is different from that for a reasonable, logical person," he said.

Militant Iranian students announced yesterday they would march to the British mission in Tehran next Sunday to reaffirm Iran's death order against Rushdie.

An organisation of Muslim university students called on people to join the march "to voice their hatred towards global arrogance led by the United States and the ominous conspiracies of Britain," Iran's Iran news agency reported.

"Self-sacrificing guardians are ready to materialise the wish of world's Muslims once Rushdie emerged from his hideout," Mahmoud Mirlohi, deputy commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Committee—a revolutionary police force—said in an interview published in the daily Aftab newspaper.

Official and press comments stressed the death order, issued by Khomeini on Feb 14, 1989, could not be lifted even if Rushdie repented.

"Like a mother-cat carrying her kittens between her teeth, British police guards take Rushdie from one hotel to another," Atallah Mohajerani, vice-president for cultural affairs, said on Tehran radio.

Abrar labelled Rushdie "the most unfortunate victim of British foreign policy in 1989."

Jomhuri Eslami daily, saying that Rushdie affair had dragged on for a year only because "London's intransigence, urged the British government to hand over the author and apologise to Muslims."

Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati sent a message to the Organisation of Islamic Conference urging Muslim nations to close ranks against what he termed the West's conspiracies against Islam.

Most bodies charred

52 of the 90 Indian Airlines disaster victims identified

By Thomas Abraham
Arab Times correspondent

BANGALORE, Feb 16: There were heart-rending scenes outside the mortuary in the Victoria hospital here, where the bodies of the victims of Wednesday's air crash were kept.

When this correspondent visited the mortuary Thursday morning, relatives and friends had placed hundreds of wreaths

on the bodies wrapped in white sheets.

Most bodies were charred beyond recognition. Relatives were seen moving from body to body, desperately trying to identify their near and dear ones.

By Thursday night, about 52 of the 90 victims had been identified. All the unidentified bodies will be cremated here in a mass funeral Sunday afternoon. The other bodies are being handed

over in coffins to relatives and arrangements being made to take them to their home towns.

Latest information available Thursday said there were about 30 foreigners on the ill-fated aircraft.

Relatives of the victims started arriving in Bangalore on Wednesday night itself in two scheduled and one special flight.

At the hospital, this correspondent saw most people reach-

ing there straight from the airport, with their baggage still with them. Some people from abroad were also expected soon.

Inside the mortuary, it was a near hopeless situation. The authorities had set up a counter displaying possessions found on the victims to help in the identification.

"My son was taller," R.S. Sujir of Bangalore could be heard crying. An engineer in the Indian

Telephone Industries (ITI) Sujir had lost his wife, Jamuna, a journalist with Bombay-based Lana group of publications, and his two-year-old son.

"Also, my son's ears were bigger," he said. Sujir had been shown the body of a toddler but was quite certain it was not his son, Ashwin.

Sujir told this correspondent that he had talked to his wife on the telephone the previous day for nearly 40 minutes. "I also talked to my son. He asked me to come to the airport and pick him up in the car," he said. Like many others, Sujir was waiting outside the arrival lounge for the aircraft to land when they heard a loud noise. It is only some 20 minutes later that they had their worst fears confirmed.

When informed that there would be a mass funeral of all unidentified bodies Sunday, Sujir immediately said, "I will attend that."

Civil Aviation Minister Arif Mohammad Khan visited the mortuary Thursday morning and consoled some of the relatives. As he listened to their tales of agony, Khan himself broke down on occasions.

Many relatives and friends could be seen making repeated trips to the halls, taking a second and third look at the bodies. "Mere ko 16 M took lagta hai" (I think body with number 16 M is the right one), one man was heard telling another.

All of them, some wailing, others just grim-faced, filed past the bodies, wading through the water melting from the ice-slabs kept in the hall. Two nurses were on hand, ready to assist in the identification of bodies through their dental history. Some confusion arose when the same body was claimed by more than one person.

Among those who turned up at the hospital were friends of the London-based Gujarati family of the Vaganians, who perished in the crash. The friends were heard telling the airline officials that relatives of the Vaganians would be reaching Bangalore later. They had already seen the bodies and tentatively identified them. "But the final identification will be made by the family. Till then, please do not hand over these bodies to anyone else," they pleaded, apparently, the same bodies had been claimed by someone else also. The Vaganians belonged to the Bhuj area of Gujarat.

The victims also included an employee of the Oil and Natural Gas Commission, R.P. Srivastava. Another victim was 47-year-old Ashok Birla, the prominent industrialist, who was chairman of Birla Yamaha, Birla 3M and Dagger Forst, among other companies. His wife and daughter were also killed.

There were some 13 couples among those who were killed in the crash.

Though Bangalore is a major aviation centre, this was the first air crash in the city. The fire brigade, the hospitals, the police, the ground staff of Indian Airlines and others are reported to have responded to the crisis magnificently.

List of those reported killed in the Bangalore crash: B. Balachandrar, R. Barboza, C.M. Bell, A.V. Birla, Ms S. Birla, A. Chid, S.J. Chhabra, Ms H.N. Gandhi, P.C. Jain, J. Joshi, Mr S. Mehta, S.D. Muthi, Ms P.M. Nayak, P.M. Nayak, Parammal, H.M. Panchrat, H.M. Patel, Ms S. Prema, Ms V.S. Ramana, Shelat, D. Shroff, N. Singh, Ms R.P. Singh, H. Vihor, A. Dinesh, Ms Rajalakshmi (air hostess), B.K. Govindraj, Akkamma, Ms J. Bell, K.N. Bhalla, Ms C. Bhamagar, Ms M. Bhatnagar, B.N. Bhat, Chandrasekhar, A.A. Deen, Tom DSA, Alex Fromme, N. Ganesha, C. Ganesha, Tirtha Gupta, R. Hager, I. Haque, S. Harish, Horst, Howell, Ms S. Howell, Ms Juma Yasmin, Juma Yunus, Ms L. Jhunjhunwala, P. Kabra, Ms Y. Kabra, M. Kakkar, K.P. Krishnan, Ms K. Krishnan, V. Kulkarni, H. Lank, A. Madan, Ms V. Malpani, P. Malpani, O.P. Matta, Ms A. Moss, V.R. Nagarajan, Orayen, Ms Orayen, P. Rajkumar, R. Randhawa, Rangarajan, Shah, S.C. Shah, V.R. Shetkar, R. Shrivastava, R.P. Srivastava, Ms. Jamuna Sujir, Thambi, Jhunjhunwala, V.S. Umrik, Ms Umrik, D.R. Vagiani, P.D. Vaghiani, K.D. Vaghiani, T.D. Vaghiani, A. Wahed, three unidentified infants, Capt. Gopojkar, C. Capt. Cyril Fernandez, Ms Mary Chacko (air hostess).

Gas leak kills 4, hurts 90

CALCUTTA, Feb 16, (AP): Chlorine gas seeped from a small paint factory early today, killing four people, and injuring about 90 others living in a nearby shantytown, police said.

The dead included a three-year-old girl, her eight-year-old brother and their 35-year-old father, and a worker at the factory, located in one of the city's most densely populated and poorest neighbourhoods, police said.

At least 20 of the injured were hospitalised, many in serious condition, said police officials, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Thousands missing: Amnesty

Lanka lifts restrictions

COLOMBO, Feb 16, (AP): The government has decided to partially lift emergency regulations, including a law that allows security forces to dispose of bodies without inquest, a senior minister said yesterday.

The announcement came hours after Amnesty International harshly criticised the restrictions and said thousands of people had disappeared or were murdered by the government forces and death squads last year.

Foreign Minister Ranjana Wijeratne told reporters six emergency regulations imposed in June would be repealed at midnight. They involve restrictions on publications, political parties and travel on rail and public transport.

President Ranasinghe Premadasa assured rival politicians on Wednesday that he would revoke some of the emergency rules imposed to try to quell a two-year-old

uprising by ultranationalist Sinhalese extremists. More than 6,000 people have been killed in the fighting in southern and central Sri Lanka.

A separate rebellion by minority in the north and East has cost 11,000 lives since 1983. Sinhalese militants began attacking the Sinhalese-dominated government when it tried to make peace with the Tamil rebels, contending the government was making too many concessions.

The emergency regulations, which need the approval of Parliament each month, give broad powers to security forces to search, arrest or detain suspects for indefinite periods.

Amnesty International said reports of killings increased sharply after emergency regulations were introduced.

Bid to destabilise Colombo

COLOMBO, Feb 16, (Reuters): Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Ranjana Wijeratne said yesterday an Indian intelligence agency was planning to kill key men in the Sri Lankan government.

He said 100 people had been detained for further questioning over the alleged plot.

Wijeratne was replying to questions at a news conference about his statement on Wednesday that the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) of the Indian government was attempting to "destabilise" Colombo.

Asked how RAW planned to do this, Wijeratne said "by killing key men in the government."

Wijeratne, who is also deputy defence minister, declined to identify the targets.

The minister said of the 100 people detained, 70 were Tamils and the rest Sinhalese. Some had been caught with arms and ammunition.

"This country is not going to tolerate RAW or anybody else," he said. "I warn them (RAW agents) that if I catch them, we will execute them."

An Indian high commission spokesman on Wednesday denied the accusation.

Two MQM activists tortured to death

KARACHI, Feb 16, (Reuters): Two activists of an ethnic group were abducted in Karachi on Wednesday and tortured to death, police said.

The bodies of the two members of the Mohajir National Movement (MQM) which claims to speak for Mohajir immigrants from India, were found dumped in an isolated area.

The MQM blamed followers of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto for the killings—a charge denied by a spokesman for Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party.

More than 70 people have died in violence in Karachi since February 7.



Mudslide horror

Part of a house is carried away by a mudslide after torrential rains continued for three days near

Anancy, in the Haute-Savoie region of the French Alps. (Reuters wirephoto)

Paris appeals to cancel vacations in Alps as bad weather kills 10

PARIS, Feb 16, (UPI): Environment Minister Brice Lalonde appealed to French families today to postpone or cancel vacations in the Alps this weekend because "I do not want to have dozens of victims" from avalanches plaguing the mountain range.

Authorities said at least 10 people were killed since the latest spell of bad weather hit France on Wednesday, four of them including a Briton in the Alpine Savoy region.

"Families should consider deferring their departures or not leaving on vacation for they risk finding tempests, floods or avalanches," Lalonde said in a

statement. Many skiing resorts in Savoy were isolated by avalanches that cut highways and delayed train services.

Floods have caused widespread damage in Brittany and Normandy.

In Geneva authorities said three people were feared dead after heavy rains and mudslides in low-lying areas, while 1.80 metres (six feet) of new snow in the Alps over the past 48 hours stranded thousands in ski resorts.

In St Gall state, near the German border, mudslides ripped through houses.

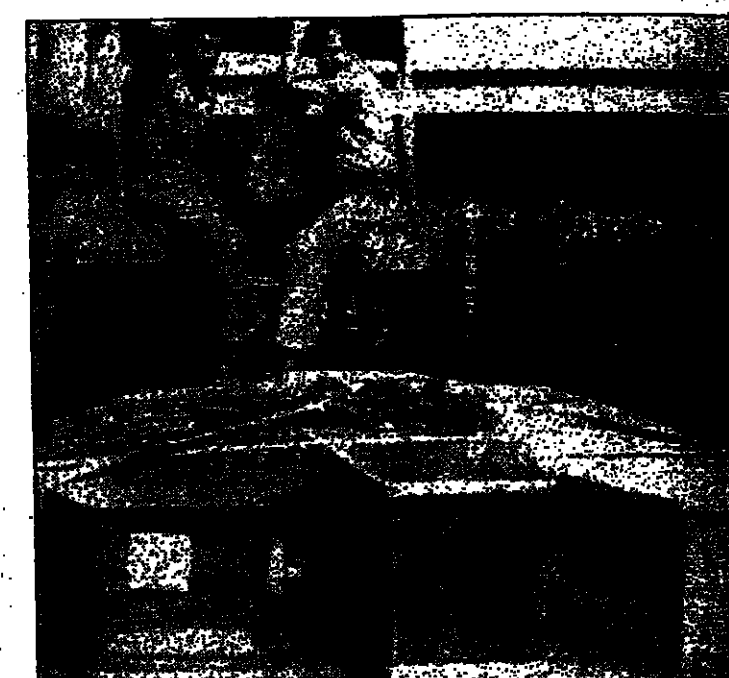
At least two people drowned yesterday and 50 were forced to leave their homes after heavy rain and snow caused flooding in the southwestern German state of Baden-Wuerttemberg, police said.

Floods caused widespread damage in Alsace and in Normandy. A motorist was swept away and drowned near Masevaux and a man was killed at Soultz-Sous-Forêt when a tree he was cutting down was blown on top of him.

In the Alps access to many skiing resorts was cut by avalanches. Authorities sent 100 firemen and 60 soldiers equipped with sniffer dogs to the Savoy region in case they were needed to carry out rescue work there.



Anxious relatives of passengers of the Indian Airlines Airbus crash near Bangalore wait for news of survivors at Bombay's Santa Cruz airport. (Reuters wirephoto)



Coffins containing the bodies of some of the 90 people killed in the Bangalore plane crash arrive at Bombay airport. (Reuters wirephoto)

Bangla danger

Global warming

DHAKA, Feb 16, (Reuters): More than 15 per cent of Bangladesh's total land area will disappear under water in the next 60 years due to the global warming trend known as the greenhouse effect, a leading environmental expert said.

Fasihuddin Mahtab, former planning minister, told a seminar on Wednesday: "The sea will swell by up to one metre by the year 2050 due to the greenhouse effect, inundating 15 per cent of Bangladesh, mainly coastal areas."

"The greenhouse effect and damage to the ozone layer will also send in saline water down

the country's vast network of rivers, changing cropping patterns and causing foodgrain losses."

Mahtab, who recently completed a study on the subject, suggested massive forestation along the country's coast and building of flood barriers to overcome salinity problems.

Bangladesh, which holds a population of 110 million crammed into 55,600 square miles (144,000 sq km), last month proposed that the United Nations set up a committee in Dhaka representing all countries likely to be affected by global warming.

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Marion Barry. (Reuters wirephoto)

Drug charge, Barry to fight

WASHINGTON, Feb. 16, (Reuters): Washington Mayor Marion Barry has been formally charged with eight drug-related offenses and vowed to battle what he branded a "political lynching" by the US Justice Department.

A US grand jury climaxed a year-long probe with an eight-charge indictment yesterday. If convicted on all counts, Barry would face a maximum 20 years in prison and \$1.25 million in fines.

Barry, one of the nation's most prominent black leaders, was charged with three felony counts for allegedly lying when he told the grand jury that he had never used drugs and on five lesser misdemeanor counts of cocaine possession.

Barry, in his 11th year as mayor of the US capital, was accused of possessing cocaine four times in 1988 after a probe of an incident at a hotel here and on January 18, 1990 when he was arrested in an undercover operation after agents videotaped him allegedly smoking highly addictive crack cocaine.

Since his arrest, Barry, 53, has been under voluntary therapy for what he has called alcoholism at a drug and alcohol treatment centre in west Palm Beach, Florida.

Although Barry's political future seems in shambles, he promised a stiff fight to prove his innocence in a statement he issued from his office here after the indictment.

"Today's indictment does not surprise me at all because it represents a continuation of the political lynching and excesses of the justice department in this multi-year, multi-million dollar effort to investigate me and the Barry administration," the Barry statement said.

The political lynching charge was seen as potentially racially explosive in a city that is 70 per cent black. He had been very popular but his popularity started fading after the much publicised grand jury probe started.

The prosecution is led by US attorney Jay Stephens, who is white and has denied repeatedly that his pursuit of the black mayor was politically or racially motivated.

Barry also vowed to fight to maintain his innocence and rejected suggestions that he resign, although he has turned over most duties to an acting mayor. A felony conviction would bar him from office.

Avianca lawsuit

NEW YORK, Feb. 16, (AP): A man who was aboard Avianca flight 52 with two newly adopted Colombian children has filed a multimillion-dollar lawsuit against the airline for injuries the three sustained in last month's crash.

The suit, filed Wednesday in US district court, seeks \$105 million in compensatory and punitive damages for William and Aletia Heidt, of Wyckoff, New Jersey, and their adoptive children, Peter, 11 and Bianca, 13.

Heidt was returning from Colombia with the children when the Avianca jet crashed Jan. 25 in Cove Neck on Long Island, just northeast of Kennedy airport. They were among 55 injured passengers. Seventy-three people, including the flight crew, died.

"The claim against Avianca is that the pilot ran out of gas. It's as simple as that," Kenneth Nolan, Heidt's attorney, said.

Heidt, 51, a machine shop supervisor, severely fractured both legs, his neck and several ribs. He has undergone several operations since the crash.

The children suffered lesser physical injuries but Nolan said both are experiencing extreme psychological problems.

Ex-presidents don't want the job again

It's time for young — Ford; happy in new life — Reagan; I don't miss it — Carter; It's silly question — Nixon

WASHINGTON, Feb. 16, (AP): None of the four living former US presidents shows any interest in having the job again, according to an article in the forthcoming issue of the Sunday newspaper supplement USA Weekend.

"The time has come for younger people to serve the country," General Ford, 77, told the magazine in an interview for its Feb. 16-18 issue.

Ronald Reagan, 79, asked if he would like to be president again, said, "I do not think so... Nancy and I are happy in our new life now and I like being back out there on 'the mashed potato circuit' talking with the people and, I hope, inspiring them to urge their representatives to do some of the things we weren't able to accomplish."

Jimmy Carter, 65, said he and his wife, Rosalynn, don't "miss the pomp, ceremony and perks but we often remember how nice it was to visit Camp David." He said he would not want to return to office, but would "be happy if one of my grandchildren becomes president."

Richard Nixon, 77, asked if he would want to be president again, replied only, "not if I have to answer such silly questions as this one."

Reagan, Carter and Nixon responded to questions in writing. Ford was interviewed over the telephone.

All four said they do not believe former presidents should have any formal role in government, such as a senator-at-large seat that has sometimes been suggested.

Reagan and Ford both supported President George Bush's decision to invade Panama. Carter said he "deplored the invasion" but hoped it would lead to "freedom, democracy and economic prosperity."

Nixon said, "I understand why President Bush acted as he did," but added that in general the United States should not directly depose foreign leaders. "When the United

States decides by itself who is going to run a country, it runs the risk of ending up running the country itself," he said.

Carter, commenting on the suggestion of some writers that he is gaining more distinction as an active ex-president than he did in office, said it "does not bother me, and I am grateful for the more favourable attitude of the news media in recent years."

Vow to fight drugs

US forces in Andean region ruled out

CARTAGENA, Colombia, Feb. 16, (AP): The president of the United States and three cocaine-producing nations of South America have forged an agreement on a new drug-fighting strategy during a tense summit under an air, sea and land security shield.

US President George Bush boasted that the new pact he had signed yesterday with Presidents Virgilio Barco of Colombia, Alan Garcia of Peru and Jaime Paz Zamora of Bolivia would create the world's "first anti-drug cartel."

A joint communique signed by the four presidents apparently ruled out the use of US military forces in the Andean region. "Each country may involve its armed forces in this fight within its own national territory," the document said.

In their meeting, they steered away from some of the most controversial drug initiatives, such as the idea of a naval cordon off Colombia, and chose instead to deal in broader themes. That helped keep harmony among the sometimes differing leaders.

Extraordinary security precautions were taken to protect the four leaders: 5,000 uniformed troops guarded the proceedings; battleships presented an imposing force off shore and helicopter gunships hovered nearby.

But Colombian guerrillas made their own point, abducting a US priest in Cali, the third US citizen taken prisoner by the rebels this week.

A small bomb also exploded yesterday morning, 4.5 miles (7.2 kilometres) from Barranquilla airport, damaging a voltage regulator of a line that fed the air-conditioning of the airport where Bush landed two hours later.

Bush pledged that the United States would step up its efforts to cut down on drug use and lower demand for the cocaine produced in Bolivia, Colombia and Peru. The three Latin presidents had come to the summit complaining that the United States had not done enough to curtail demand.

Back in Washington DC, the US capital, federal prosecutors sent their own message — announcing the indictment of Mayor Marion Barry on eight counts of perjury and possession of a controlled substance, cocaine.

"Every tactic and every weapon pales into insignificance compared to the need to reduce demand," Barco said. "The only law that the narco-terrorists do not break is the law of supply and demand."

Zamora said the leaders had talked about creating an "alternate economy" so the peasants of the coca-growing and processing nations would not be dependent on the crop for their livelihoods.

After the meetings, he said, "we understand the true magnitude of the problem and how to face it."

Bush returned to Washington yesterday night on Air Force One, the US presidential plane, without incident.

At the end of the summit, Garcia, who once threatened to boycott the meeting to protect the US invasion of Panama, spoke on the need for a vigorous crop substitution programme.

"What has changed here is concepts, so that we never go back — a better relationship between Latin America and the United States," he said.

Barco said, "no," when asked if Colombia would be willing to have US naval forces patrolling in international waters off Colombia's coast to keep track of drug shipments. "It is not necessary," he said.

Responding to Colombian complaints that US trade policy has harmed its major legal exports such as coffee, cut flowers and sugar, Bush promised to work to help open more US markets.

Conference
In their communique, the four presidents called for a "world conference against illicit drug trafficking in 1991." The four nations agreed to hold a high-level follow-up to yesterday's session within six months, but specified no level of US aid to help the South American countries.

Bush previously had pledged \$2.2 billion over five years to aid the Andean mountain countries economically and militarily in waging the drug war. He said yesterday he did not foresee any immediate increases in that commitment.

But he did say the four had taken significant steps to work together on the problem. "We, in fact, created the first anti-drug cartel," he said.

The statement recognised that persuading Andean farmers to substitute legal crops for coca, the leaves of which are used to make cocaine, would have "significant, immediate and long-term economic costs" on the three South American countries.

US officials also reached agreement with Bolivia to help stem the movement of US firearms into South American nations and signed tax accords with both Bolivia and Peru aimed at establishing a system to trace drug profits and money-laundering schemes.



That One

The four presidents attending the anti-drug summit (left to right) Alan Garcia, Peru; Jaime Paz Zamora, Bolivia; Virgilio Barco, Colombia and George Bush, US; study the Cartagena skyline yesterday. (Reuters wirephoto)

Anti-US protest

Third kidnap

BOGOTA, Feb. 16, (Reuters): Suspected pro-Cuban guerrillas yesterday kidnapped a US priest, the third American seized this week in apparent protest against President George Bush's visit to Colombia to attend an anti-drug summit.

Police said they presumed National Liberation Army (ELN) rebels kidnapped Francisco Antonio Amiko Ferrari, head of a Canadian-sponsored Catholic community in the southwestern city of Cali, home of a powerful drug smuggling cartel.

On Monday the ELN kidnapped American businessman James Arthur Donnelly and on Tuesday American teacher David Leslie Kent was abducted near the northern city of Medellin, home of a rival cocaine cartel.

The ELN told Colombian media they kidnapped Donnelly and Kent to protest against Bush's visit to Cartagena, where he met the leaders of Colombia, Peru and Bolivia on Thursday to forge a co-ordinated battle against trafficking.

Amiko Ferrari, about 40 years old, was seized in the Puerto Mallarino suburb of Cali by men travelling in a red car and was taken away, Cali police told reporters.

Police suspected the kidnappers were ELN guerrillas, Colombia's most active rebel group. This month the ELN blew up the main Cano Limon oil pipeline, killed seven soldiers in an ambush and kidnapped a Colombian senator.

Scattered disturbances broke out in Colombia to protest against Bush's visit. Students chanting anti-US slogans set ablaze three vehicles in front of the University of Antioquia in Medellin, police said.

EEC bid to make laundering a crime

Law by Jan 1992

STRASBOURG, France, Feb. 16, (AP): The EEC commission proposed draft legislation to make money laundering criminal in all 12 European Economic Community member states by Jan. 1, 1992.

If adopted by the member states' governments, banks and other financial institutions would have to report transactions they suspected came from drug trafficking, terrorism or other organised crime.

Under criminal law, banking secrecy rules are lifted so a bank would not be breaching its obligations if it reported suspicions of criminal activity.

Sir Leon Brittan, EEC commissioner for competition, said that "those who live by trade in drugs, terrorism and organised crime," should not benefit from the disappearance of most restrictions on capital movement with the community due to take effect on July 1.

Ireland, Portugal and Greece are the only EEC nations where legislation to make money laundering criminal is neither in place nor being planned.

Under the commission's proposal, financial institutions would have to identify customers and take "reasonable measures" in doubtful cases. "To establish the reality of the persons on whose behalf an operation is carried out or an account is opened."

If the institution discovered facts which made it suspect a money laundering offence, it would inform law enforcement authorities and give them all the information asked for.

The approach is different from that in the United States where all transactions over \$10,000 are automatically reported to the authorities.

Israeli hired hand in jet blast

BOGOTA, Feb. 16, (AP): The head of Colombia's intelligence police said that a retired Israeli colonel trained the men who placed a bomb aboard an Avianca airliner that killed all 197 aboard last fall.

Gen. Miguel Maza Marquez said that Col. Yair Klein, who previously has been accused of training paramilitary squads for drug traffickers, was legally responsible for the deaths.

"This is the person who has done the most damage to Colombia," Marquez said in a news conference in the city of Cartagena, site of a anti-drug summit between President George Bush of the United States, Virgilio Barco of Colombia, Jaime Paz of Bolivia and Alan Garcia of Peru.

Last year Colombian authorities issued an arrest warrant for Klein, whom they accused of leading a team of Israeli, British and Australian mercenaries in Colombia.

Colombian police seized files of the group training paramilitary squads and said that drug traffickers paid the mercenaries to give the courses.

Maza said that some of the men who received the training later blew up the Avianca Boeing 727 shortly after it took off from Bogota on a domestic flight Nov. 27.

The attack was one of more than 260 terrorist actions apparently taken by drug traffickers since the government began a crackdown against them last August. More than 200 people have died in the attacks.

"Klein was the man who trained the actual perpetrators of the Avianca Airlines attack," Maza said. "He was the one who taught them how to make the bomb and therefore is responsible under Colombian criminal law for this atrocious crime."

Klein is living in Israel and is being investigated by the country's authorities. There is no extradition agreement between Israel and Colombia.

Maza said that two of the suspects in the airliner bombing were killed in a chain of Bogota massacres following the death of Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha, a leader of the Medellin drug cartel, in a Dec. 15 gunfight with police.

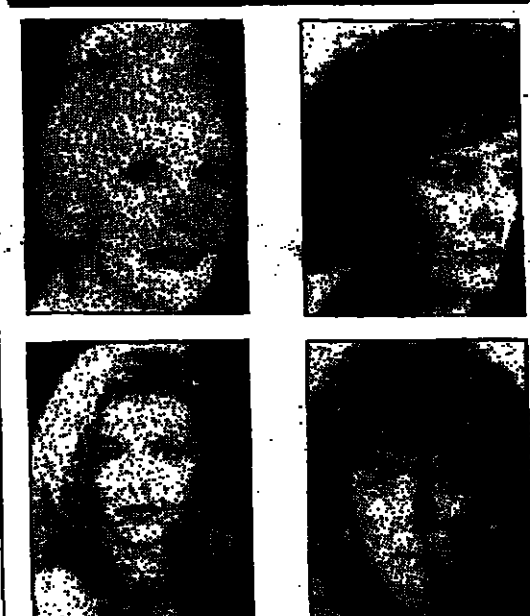
A joint operation carried out by Colombian police and Interpol, the international police agency, uncovered evidence that two members of ETA, the Basque Separatist Organisation, also had carried out terrorist activities in Colombia, Maza said.

He accused the two men of a Dec. 6 bombing of the intelligence police headquarters in Bogota in which 63 people died. He declined to identify the suspects, saying the investigation of their activities was continuing.



Hallelujah

US President George Bush raises his arms to the sun as he arrives in Barranquilla, Colombia, yesterday to attend drug summit in Cartagena. (Reuters wirephoto)



The nominees are...

The nominees for Best Actress (top left to right), Jessica Tandy for 'Driving Miss Daisy', Jessica Lange for 'Music Box', (Below left to right) Michelle Pfeiffer for 'The Fabulous Baker Boy' and Pauline Collins for 'Shirley Valentine'. (Reuters wirephoto)



Directors vying

The nominees for Best Director Academy Award are: clockwise from top left: Woody Allen for 'Crimes and Misdemeanors', Kenneth Branagh for 'Henry V', Oliver Stone for 'Born on the Fourth of July', Peter Weir for 'Dead Poets Society'. There was no photo available for director Jim Sheridan for 'My Left Foot'. (Reuters wirephoto)

First guilty plea in Noriega trial

MIAMI, Feb. 16, (AP): A Panamanian pilot admitted yesterday flying \$800,000 in cocaine profits from Florida to Panama in 1983, becoming the first of Manuel Noriega's co-defendants to plead guilty in the drug trafficking case.

Noriega's lawyers said their client had nothing to fear from information the pilot, Eduardo Pardo, might give prosecutors.

"If he tells the truth, he can't hurt us," said Noriega attorney Frank Rubino.

Pardo, 44, was arrested by Drug Enforcement Administration agents in Panama City after the US invasion. His attorney, William Meadows, and assistant US Attorney Michael Sullivan said there was no plea bargain in the case.

Noriega and Pardo were among 16 people indicted in Miami in February 1988 on charges of taking part in a conspiracy that made Panama a way station and processing centre for Colombia's Medellin drug cartel.

Shaken and occasionally close to three years, Pardo, who faces up to five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine at sentencing April 25 on a single count of illegal travel, admitted to prosecutors' account of the 1983 drug-money flight.

Pardo and co-defendant Daniel Miranda flew a Learjet fitted "with secret compartments so that money could be hidden," Sullivan told the court. "They were worried that the secret compartment made the plane unsafe to fly, but they were assured it was OK."

Pardo received \$40,000 for the flight and knew it was drug money, the prosecutor said.

Meadows said he had no idea whether Pardo would testify against Noriega or any of the other defendants.

The defendant most immediately threatened by Pardo, should he testify for the prosecution, appeared to be Miranda, who allegedly accompanied him on the flight.

But Miranda's attorney, Michael O'Kane, said his client did not know the money came from drugs. "I guess Pardo's guilty. That doesn't mean that Miranda is," O'Kane said.

Richard Sharpestein, attorney for Brian Alden Davidson, the only defendant free on bail, said outside court that even without an agreement to testify for the government, Pardo's plea made him a likely witness.

Noriega is accused of accepting \$4.6 million in bribes from the Medellin Cartel.

The Panamanian leader, who surrendered to US troops after the Dec. 20 invasion of his country, has disputed the rights of a US civilian court to judge him, claiming he is a prisoner of war.

MEDICAL FILE

Drugs tailored to race: Physical differences may explain why blacks suffer more from high blood pressure than whites, and doctors must consider race when treating hypertension, researchers said Friday.

A panel of medical experts, in reports presented by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, said recently discovered variations in the blood dynamics of blacks and whites have important implications for treating hypertension.

Hypertension or high blood pressure is a common disease in the United States, affecting about 20 per cent of the population. Blacks are about twice as likely to be afflicted as whites, and often have more severe problems with kidney and heart damage from the disorder.

Edward Frohlich of the Alton Ochsner Medical Foundation in New Orleans said his studies have uncovered key differences between white and black blood pressure patients. In both races, the volume of blood usually decreases in response to the constriction of blood vessels associated with hypertension. (UPI)

Muscular dystrophy research: Researchers hope they have found a way to treat muscular dystrophy by altering the genetic makeup of weakened muscles.

Scientists injected donor cells into the foot of a nine-year-old muscular dystrophy patient at the University of Tennessee on Thursday, testing a procedure called a myoblast transfer which may lead to medical treatments of genetically based diseases.

Leon Chazotte, a New York child neurologist with the Muscular Dystrophy Association, said it apparently was the first time cells have been injected into living human tissue in hopes they would blend with dystrophic cells and restore them to normal.

"If I were the family of this child and the thousands like him, I would be heartened by what's going to happen in the 1990s, which I hope is going to be the successful treatment of many genetic disorders. (AP)

Mouse virus poses risks: A common mouse virus may be fooling some AIDS researchers and triggering the production of new and more hazardous strains of the deadly AIDS virus, researchers said on Thursday.

A research team led by Dr Robert Gallo of the National Cancer Institute warned that the mouse virus, called the murine leukemia virus, has been found able to alter the traits of the acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) virus when the two microbes come in contact in laboratory cultures of human cells.

When the two viruses mingled in the lab, new strains of the AIDS virus resulted that reproduced more rapidly and were able to invade more types of human cells than the regular AIDS virus, the scientists said in the current issue of Science magazine.

"So far the AIDS virus changes have been seen only in cultured cells, but if they occur (in laboratory) mice the animals might produce viral variants that can spread by novel routes (possibly including) transmission through the air," Science magazine writer Jean Marx wrote in an accompanying article. (Reuters)

Leukemia mouse model: Researchers, using an intricate manipulation of genes and transplantation of bone marrow, have produced a mouse model that suffers from a vicious form of human leukemia, giving scientists a new way to test therapies against the killer disease.

In a report to be published Friday in the magazine Science, researchers at the Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research said they have discovered a way to give chronic myelogenous leukemia, CML, to laboratory mice. CML is a form of leukemia that usually attacks adults and is only rarely cured.

"With this new animal model, experimental therapies that might otherwise be tried in human patients can now be tested in these mice," said George Daley, lead researcher in the study at Whitehead.

Daley said that study also proves that CML is initiated by the fusion of parts from two broken chromosomes, a finding that had been suggested by earlier studies in other laboratories. Those parts have been identified as the so-called ABL gene from chromosome 9 and a gene called BCR from chromosome 22. (AP)

Radiation and child leukaemia linked: High rates of leukaemia in young people living near nuclear plants may be caused by radiation doses their fathers received before they were born, according to a new study published Thursday in London.

Those who work at nuclear plants, particularly those who received high radiation doses in the six months before their children's conception, had more offspring with leukaemia than men in other jobs, according to the study published in the British Medical Journal.

One researcher, radiotherapist Michael Sore, said the radiation probably caused a mutation in the fathers' sperm.

The researchers, headed by Martin Gardner, professor of medical studies at the University of Southampton, examined 52 victims of leukaemia and lymphoma under 25 years old, who were born in the West Cambridgeshire health district and diagnosed between 1950-85. They were compared with 1,001 control children. (AP)

Dutch AIDS vaccine trial promising: An experimental vaccine which may lead to a cure for the killer AIDS disease has produced promising results, Dutch scientists say.

The Netherlands Organisation for Applied Research is following up an experiment carried out in Louisiana last year in which the vaccine successfully protected eight of nine monkeys against SIV, an AIDS-like virus.

SIV (Simian Immunodeficiency Virus) occurs only in monkeys but is similar to the human immune deficiency syndrome (HIV) virus that causes AIDS.

"We are now looking at the immunological basis of protection to see why protection occurs and to see if we can reproduce it on a bigger scale," veterinary pathologist Jonathan Henney told Reuters on Wednesday. (Reuters)

Barbara's cancerous cell removed: First Lady Barbara Bush had a small cancerous cell removed from her upper lip on Wednesday, her press office announced.

"No side effects or subsequent difficulties are expected," her press office said Thursday.

She underwent outpatient procedure at Bethesda Naval Hospital in Maryland.

In a one-paragraph statement, her press office said: "At Bethesda Naval Hospital on Feb. 14, Mrs. Bush underwent a routine outpatient medical procedure to remove a small basal cell carcinoma, a common form of skin cancer, from her upper lip. The procedure was performed under local anesthesia by Bethesda's chief of dermatology, Dr. Harry Parlette. No side effects or subsequent difficulties are expected." (AP)

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Argentina, UK restore ties

Dispute over Falklands remain unresolved: UN hails decision

LONDON, Feb 16, (AP): Britain and Argentina have welcomed the agreement to restore diplomatic ties severed nearly eight years ago by the Falklands war, but their dispute over ownership of the British-ruled islands goes on.

British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd said on Sky television last night that the agreement reached by officials of the two countries in Madrid earlier in the day was a very good one.

"It underlines the fact that we have no quarrel with Argentina and this has been achieved without any sacrifice of (British) sovereignty" over the islands, he said.

But President Carlos Menem at a news conference in Buenos Aires repeated Argentina's claim over the South Atlantic islands 300 miles (480 kms) off his country's coast.

Argentine Foreign Minister Domingo Cavallo said the deal "means passing from a state of war to a state of peace."

At the same time, Menem moved quickly to finish the process of normalising relations by announcing that career diplomat Mario Campora, who is currently deputy foreign minister, would be named the new ambassador to Britain.

British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher has consistently refused to discuss Falklands sovereignty with Argentina. In return, Argentina refused until Thursday to say it regarded hostilities with Britain in the South Atlantic to be ended.

United Nations Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar said: "I very much welcome the decision ... to re-establish diplomatic relations. This immediately creates an atmosphere of confidence."

Talks between British and Argentine officials on resuming normal relations began last August after Menem said Argentina would not raise its claim to Falklands sovereignty at them.

Talks in Bern, Switzerland, in July 1984 foundered over Argentina's insistence on raising the sovereignty issue in the face of Britain's refusal to discuss it.

The Falklands war erupted after Argentine forces invaded the islands on April 2, 1982. Britain sent a military task force, which recaptured them after a 74-day war. The fighting claimed the lives of 712 Argentines, 255 Britons and three islanders.

Argentina claims the islands, which it calls the Malvinas, are part of its Spanish colonial heritage and says Britain stole them.

A key to the Madrid deal was Britain's agreement to lift its 150 mile (240 km)-radius military protection zone around the islands, from which Argentine warships and planes were excluded.

The zone was patrolled by British submarines, ships and planes, while the islands themselves are guarded by 2,000 British troops.

Sir Crispin Tickell, the diplomat who led the British team in Madrid, said: "The zone is being lifted (from March 31) ... what we have done instead is to create security areas of importance to both countries."

The British Foreign Office said last night that the two nations had agreed to inform one another about movements of their warships and military aircraft in key areas of the South Atlantic and give notice of large military exercises.

Under the deal, Argentine warships wishing to come within 50 miles (80 kms) of the islands and Argentine warplanes wishing to come within 70 miles (110 kms) will have to give 48 hours notice.

Menem said the Madrid deal opened up trade possibilities for Argentina, a major meat exporter. "Aside from having eliminated ... the possibilities of an armed conflict, it opens for us wide possibilities in ... the European Economic Community," he said.



Soldier survives failed jump

A paratrooper dangled unconscious under a West German air force plane for 20 minutes Thursday as it circled in Arctic cold while the crew struggled to pull him in, Nato officials said.

Pvt. Michael Loeb, 21, (shown left) of Semsbach, West Germany, was treated for frostbite and shock but otherwise was unharmed, said major Luit Gandorf, a spokesman for Nato exercise Array Encounter, underway in northern Norway. A cord from Loeb's military kit tangled inside the C-160 transport plane when he jumped, leaving him hanging as the aircraft flew at 240 kilometres (150 miles) per hour, 300 metres (980 feet) above the ground, Gandorf said.

Normally, he would have been out loose and completed the jump. That wasn't possible because he lost consciousness, probably due to the cold," he said. The temperature was minus 4 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 20 Centigrade).

"I'll jump again as soon as I get the chance," Loeb, serving in the 252 para battalion from Naghold, West Germany, said from a hospital bed after the accident. (Reuters wirephoto)

Mom gets pregnant to give girl marrow transplant

LOS ANGELES, Feb 16, (UPI): A 43-year-old woman whose daughter has leukemia has become pregnant in hopes the baby will be able to provide a bone-marrow transplant for the stricken teenager.

Mary Ayala, of Walnut, California, who is due to give birth in mid-April, hopes the newborn infant's bone marrow will be a match for her 17-year-old daughter, Anissa. "I never thought I'd be pregnant at my age," the mother-to-be told the Los Angeles Times, "but when you're faced with the possibility that your child is going to die, you desperately seek, and whatever you need to do, you do it."

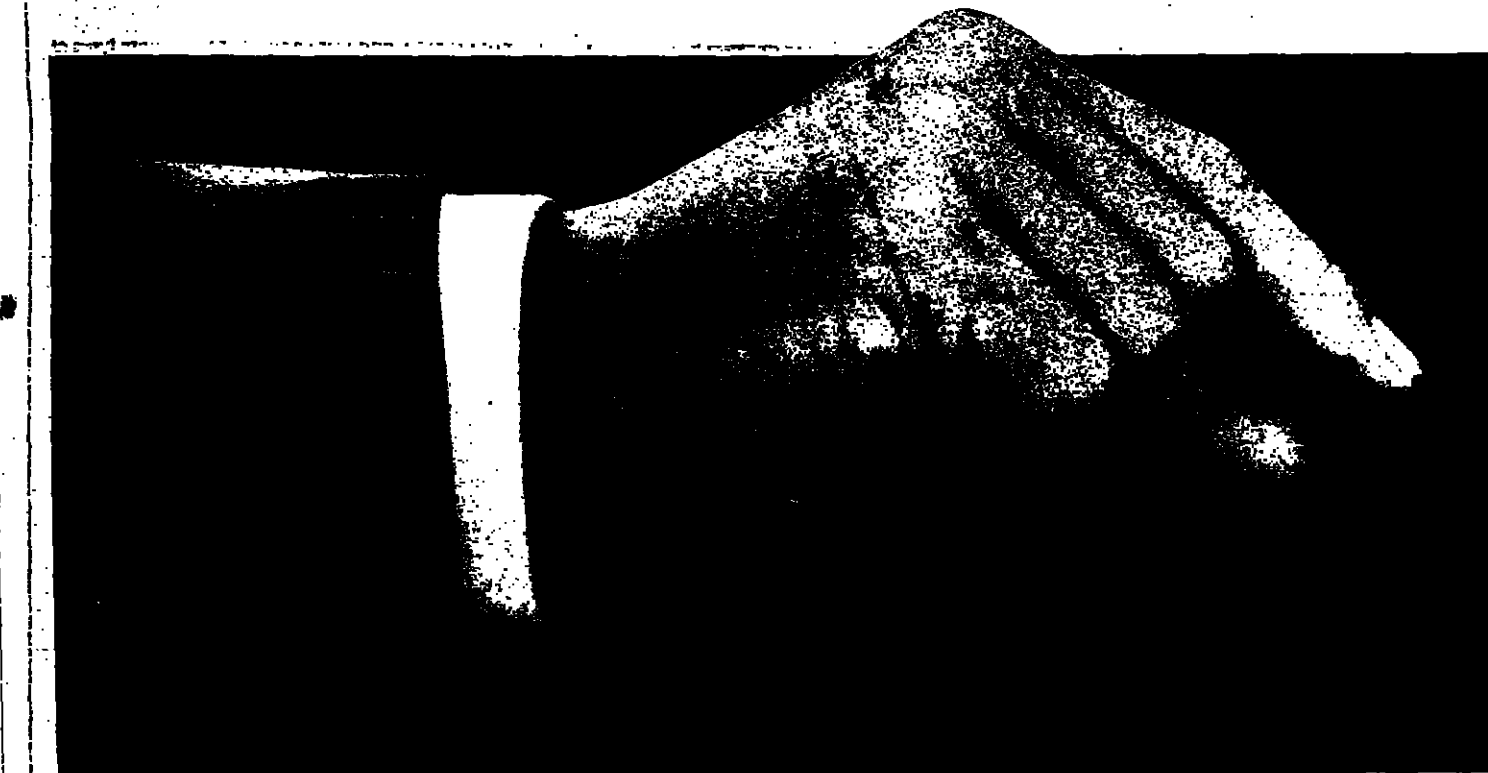
Physicians said the bone marrow can be taken with little risk from an infant who is at least six months old.

The chances for a bone marrow match among siblings is about 25 per cent, while there is only a 1-in-20,000 chance of finding a matching donor in the general population. No other family members match Anissa's bone marrow, and a search by the national

marrow donor program of unrelated donors has failed to find a match.

While parents must give consent for children to be bone-marrow donors, the newspaper reported that a mother giving birth to a child for the purpose of providing a donor raises ethical questions.

"What they're doing ethically is very troubling, but on the other hand, I can sympathise with their desire to do everything possible to save their daughter's life," Alexander M. Capron, professor of law and medicine,



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NEWS IN BRIEF

America

Ride thrives on research: Nothing can reproduce the thrill of the launch pad, but former astronaut Sally Ride is finding satisfaction in the quiet of the university campus.

Ride, America's first woman in space, joined the faculty at University of California, San Diego, last fall. She teaches physics and directs the California Space Institute, which co-ordinates space research among the state's eight UC campuses.

Ride said she thrives on hours spent in her research — the design of free electron lasers — and in meeting with students. (AP)

Bowie lawsuit dismissed: A federal judge dismissed a lawsuit against rock star David Bowie that claimed he sexually assaulted a fan and told her he had AIDS after spending the night with her.

Wanda Lee Nichols said that Bowie assaulted her after inviting her to his hotel room on Oct 9, 1987, during a concert tour stopover in Dallas.

Bowie conceded he had spent the night with Ms Nichols, but denied he had assaulted her. A grand jury declined to indict Bowie on November 18, 1987. (AP)

Close: woman of the year: Actress Glenn Close scooped up another honour from a college, this time from the Dartmouth Film Society in Hanover, New Hampshire, joining Robert Redford and Lillian Gish as recipients of the organisation's award.

"I hope I can keep doing the kind of work that warrants this overwhelming response," the actress said at Wednesday's ceremony at Dartmouth College. "It's deeply moving and I thank you from the bottom of my heart."

Close, a five-time Academy award nominee, made her film debut in 1982 in "The World According to Garp." Since then, she has starred in such films as "Fatal Attraction," and "Dangerous Liaisons." (AP)

American lords take on: Broadcast executive Laurence A. Tisch and publishing mogul Malcolm Forbes are part of a corporate bridge team taking on British parliamentarians as the lords of American finance meet real British nobility.

Sir Peter Emery of London and the selector Duke of Atholl will co-captain the British parliament team in the February 23 match in London, said Kathy Wei of the American Contract Bridge League.

Ms Wei, one of the top world bridge players, said Wednesday she will be master of ceremonies for the event. (AP)

The change will do you good: Win or lose, transsexual Terri Polman's bid for mayor promises to enliven the political landscape of Yountville, a sleepy northern California town.

Polman, a 37-year-old costume jewelry saleswoman who underwent a sex change operation in the 1970s, is campaigning on the slogan "the change will do you good."

A one-time female impersonator who moved to Yountville two years ago, Polman faces two opponents in the April 10 election. If elected, she said, she plans to donate the \$180 a month mayor's salary to charity. (Reuters)

Giant African frogs probe: Before giant Goliath frogs from Africa are allowed to hop in the annual Calaveras county frog-jumping jubilee in Angels Camp, California, US contest officials have a few questions for the folks back home.

What do Goliaths eat?
How do they catch their prey?
Can they spread disease by biting?
When is their mating season?

The Calaveras county fair board, concerned about the foreign frogs, wants to know the answers before ruling whether the Goliaths may enter the May 17-20 contest. (Reuters)

Tsunami, hits Monterey: The earthquake that rattled northern California in October triggered a four-foot-high tsunami, a huge undersea landslide and a feeding frenzy by fish in Monterey Bay, scientists say.

Towns along the bay were lucky the Tsunami, a quake-caused sea wave, occurred near low tide. If the jolt had come at high tide, "there could have been problems," oceanographer Frank Schwing said Thursday in a telephone interview. (AP)



Bolivian wealth

Peasant leaders chew coca leaves Feb 15 during a protest held in Cochabamba. The leaders of peasant groups declared yesterday National Coca Chewing Day in reaction to the drug summit held in Cartagena. The sign reads "Coca is the wealth of Bolivia." (Reuters wirephoto)

Voyager 1 appears successful: The Voyager 1 spacecraft sent radio signals to Earth on Wednesday indicating it successfully snapped pictures of most of the planets to create the first family portrait of the solar system, Nasa said.

"Engineering data we received show the proper commands were executed. It looks like the pictures were taken properly," said Mary Hardin, a spokeswoman for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

Voyager 1, which photographed Jupiter in 1980 and Saturn in 1981, was ordered to snap the photographs Tuesday evening, but it took five hours and 36 minutes for signals confirming the commands were executed to travel the 3.7 billion miles (5.9 billion kilometres) to Earth, Hardin said. (AP)

Reactor shut down: The nation's principal maker of radioactive isotopes for nuclear medicine was shut down indefinitely because of leak in its reactor cooling system, the third in three months, officials said in Sterling Forest, NY.

The US Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the State Department of Environmental Conservation ordered the Cintichem reactor shut down Tuesday until the company proves it can operate without radioactive leaks, according to a joint statement. (AP)

Latin America

Sandinistas threaten expropriation: President Daniel Ortega said Wednesday that if his leftist Sandinista Party wins this month's elections, it will seize property owned by opposition leaders, including the only opposition newspaper.

"If we win, I say he will hand them a complete bill, so they will be left without a newspaper — La Prensa — and the homes of the candidate and the vice-presidential candidate will be converted into children's homes on the day after the elections," Ortega told a campaign rally.

Ortega and Vice-President Sergio Ramirez are seeking re-election Feb 25, running against La Prensa publisher Violeta Barrios de Chamorro and Virgilio Godoy on the ticket of the 14-party United National Opposition, or UNO. (AP)

Bombs thrown at embassies: Leftist guerrillas threw bombs at the United States and Panamanian embassies and an American-owned auto parts company office, causing some damage but no injuries, police said Thursday.

In separate, nearly simultaneous attacks, the bombs were thrown from passing cars shortly before midnight Wednesday, police said.

Authorities found flyers at the facilities linking the three bombings to the pro-Cuban Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement, police said. (AP)

3 German hackers convicted of selling codes to KGB

CELLE, West Germany, Feb 16, (AP): Three West German hackers were found guilty yesterday of selling Western military computer codes to the Soviet KGB and giving suspended sentences ranging from 14 months to two years.

Dirk Brzezinski, Peter Carl and Markus Hess were arrested in March after an investigation by US and West German officials revealed the three had obtained passwords and codes giving them access to key military and research computers in the United States, Western Europe and Japan.

A fourth man, 30-year-old Karl Koch, who was also arrested in the case, committed suicide in May.

At the trial, which began Jan 11, all three admitted guilty in obtaining the codes to sell them to a Soviet KGB agent in East Berlin.

In yesterday's decision, chief Judge Leopold Spiller said the three were given suspended sentences because "it could not be proven that substantial damage had been done to the federal republic (West Germany) or its Nato partners."

But Spiller also said the three sold the computer codes for money.

Carl was sentenced to 24 months, Hess 20 months and Brzezinski 14 months.

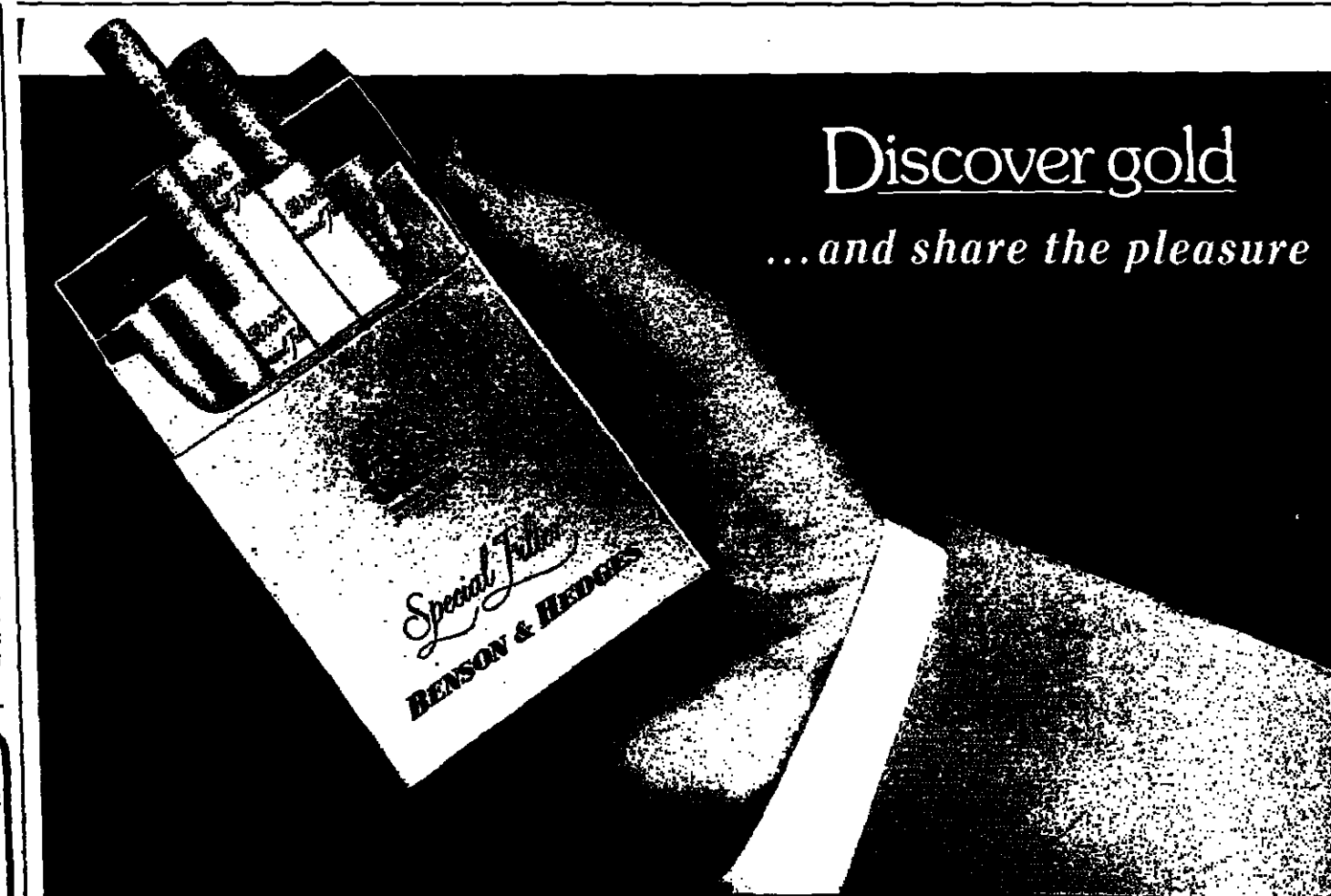
All three men were freed on suspended sentences as long as they stay out of trouble with the law for

the duration of their terms.

Carl, 35, told the court during the trial that he could only identify the KGB agent he dealt with as "Serge" and said he did not wish to reveal anything more about the Soviets in open court for fear of reprisals.

Court records show that Carl made at least 25 contacts with the Soviets and received a total 90,000 marks (\$54,500) for the computer information, which was split among the hackers, amateurs who figure out ways to access private computer systems.

Brzezinski, 30, told the court that Koch had the original idea of selling the information to the KGB.





Cheney peers through binoculars at the North Korean border. (Reuters wirephoto)

US to cut 12,000 troops in Asia, Pacific

SEOUL, Feb. 16, (AP) — US Secretary of State Dick Cheney told Seoul officials that he wants to cut US forces in Asia and the Pacific by 10 to 12 per cent — at least 12,000 troops — over the next three years.

He said about 5,000 of the troops would be pulled out of South Korea and another 7,000 to 9,400 would be withdrawn from the Philippines and Japan. There are 120,000 US troops based in the three countries.

Cheney flew by helicopter along the heavily fortified border between North and South Korea today and lunched with combat-ready American troops to discuss cutbacks in US forces.

Morning fog in the rugged terrain along the

demilitarized zone delayed Cheney's helicopter tour, but the weather improved by noon and he flew 56 kilometres (35 miles) northeast of Seoul to Camp Casey, headquarters of the US 2nd infantry division.

Cheney saw dozens of tanks, bunkers and guard posts covered with camouflage, buildings painted in full-dress battle fatigues, the standard uniform for combat-ready troops along the border between communist North Korea and the capitalist South.

Journalists were told Cheney asked to have an informal lunch with 12 non-commissioned officers "with no generals present."

Cheney explained the background of cuts in troop strength and defence spending to senior enlisted men and asked for their comments, one witness said.

There are 43,000 US troops stationed in South Korea under a mutual defence pact. US officials said yesterday about 5,000 are expected to be withdrawn in the next three years.

Cheney, who also will travel to Manila and Tokyo, said the troop cuts in South Korea would not be pushed "precipitously."

"Our commitment remains strong," Cheney told reporters yesterday.

At a meeting with South Korean President Roh

Tae-Woo yesterday, Cheney reaffirmed Washington's firm security commitment to Seoul and warned the military threat from communist North Korea "remains undiminished."

The Koreans, divided since 1945, face each other with more than 1.5 million troops deployed on both sides.

Yesterday, North Korea charged that Cheney was in the region to observe South Korean preparations for war against the North.

At a news conference at the end of talks yesterday, South Korean Defence Minister Lee Sang-Hoon said his government would give "positive consideration" to increasing its support for the US troops.

LDP win predicted in Japan election

TOKYO, Feb. 16, (AP) — Unusually high voter turnout is expected in Japan's parliamentary election this weekend, with more polls today showing the governing Liberal Democratic Party likely to stay in power.

Less than two days before the ballot, Japanese media predicted an 80-93 per cent voter turnout in Sunday's election for representatives to Parliament's powerful lower house.

The high voter interest reflects the importance of the election, which could drive the Liberal Democrats from their 34-year hold on power. Last July the Liberal Democrats lost control of the less powerful upper house in the wake of the imposition of an unpopular new sales tax and the influence-buying Recruit scandal, named after the firm at the centre of the controversy.

The newspaper Yomiuri Shimbun said today its poll showed that "the people's concern over the Recruit scandal and the consumption tax has weakened while concern over basic standard-of-living issues such as land, housing, prices and welfare has increased."

A survey by Kyodo News Service released today showed the Conservative governing party winning 46.7 per cent of the vote and the Japan Socialist Party, the No. 1 opposition group, taking 23.8 per cent. The Liberal Democrats' share increased by 1.5 per cent from a Kyodo poll taken before parliamentary elections in 1986, while the Socialists registered 13.2 per cent support at that time.

Other media polls during the week have given the Liberal Democrats 259-285 seats in the 512-seat lower house, down from their current 295, and the Socialists 120-140 seats, up from their current 85.

A party needs a minimum of 257 seats for a simple majority in the chamber, which selects the prime minister and has the power to adopt the national budget and treaties without approval of the upper house, which can block legislation on other issues.

In all the surveys, 30-40 per cent of the voters polled remained uncommitted to any candidate, leaving open the possibility of a defeat for the governing party.

Yomiuri, Japan's largest newspaper, said 80 per cent of those surveyed will cast ballots, while Kyodo said 93 per cent of those surveyed expected to. Voter turnout was 71 per cent in the 1986 balloting and 65 per cent in the upper house election last year. No margins of error were available for the polls.

Japanese officials today rebuffed suggestions by Soviet Premier Nikolai Ryzhkov that economic relations between the two countries should be considered separately from a broader territorial dispute.

"We're not desperately in need of money, in fact we have too much," acting Foreign Ministry spokesman Shigeo Takekawa said when asked Japan's position on Ryzhkov's suggestion that Tokyo could miss out on economic opportunities in the Soviet Union if it continues to insist on the return of the southern Kuril Islands.

Takekawa said the disputed territory is "the centrepiece of any relationship that might develop between Japan and the Soviet Union."

Cory plays down snub to Cheney

'Just leave it at that'

MANILA, Feb. 16, (AP) — President Corason Aquino refused yesterday to be drawn into an argument with US Defence Secretary Dick Cheney during his visit next week.

Bush, in an interview with the New York Daily News, said Aquino would "earn a great deal from Dick Cheney about the way we view the very important United States presence in the Pacific."

"President Bush and I have mutual respect for each other's personal and official views," Aquino said in a statement issued in response to request for comment on Bush's remarks published in Manila's newspapers.

"Regarding the visit of secretary Cheney, we have given our respective views. Let us just leave it at that," Aquino said.

Hawke calls snap election

Close fight likely

SYDNEY, Feb. 16, (Reuters) — Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke today called a snap election for March 24, and predicted a close fight as his Labour Party bids for a record fourth consecutive term in office.

"I'm not in any sense complacent or cocky about this campaign... it's going to be a tight campaign," Hawke told a news conference where he announced the election.

Opinion polls show Labour inching ahead of the Liberal/National Party coalition led by Andrew Peacock.

Political analysts said the campaign would hinge on economics, with Hawke defending his record and the conservative opposition, riven by leadership disputes, trying to show it has the ability to govern and do better.

"It is going to be a matter of people deciding which of the two major parties looks the most credible at pulling Australia out of the economic slump it's in," said Dean Jaensch, reader in politics at Flinders University, South Australia.

No-one was surprised by Hawke's decision to call the poll on March 24, almost two months early. Major parties have been involved in unofficial electioneering for months.

Despite voter discontent towards Labour because of high interest rates and other economic problems, the latest opinion polls show the Hawke government three percentage points ahead of the opposition.

A Morgan Gallup opinion poll released this week showed 50 per cent of Australians favoured the charismatic Hawke as prime minister, while only 18 per cent supported Peacock, who heads the Liberal Party.

"Clearly, (all the signs) suggest



Bob Hawke. (Reuters wirephoto)

that it is the right time to call an election," said Jaensch.

"Labour was certainly out of favour at the end of last year but it seems that the trendline has come back towards labour."

The opposition needs only a 2.6 per cent swing nationally to win power, or a net gain of 12 out of the 148 House of Representatives (lower house) seats.

Hawke, who took office in 1983, has given Australians the choice between what he says is labour's visionary government, with a proven record of economic management, or a bankrupt opposition.

"There is a truth of Australian politics which has been reflected over a long period of time: If you can't govern yourselves, you can't govern the country," Hawke told today's news conference.

Cheney sliced a day off his schedule to visit Manila after Aquino decided not to see him.

Aquino's decision followed the Bush administration's failure to fulfil aid commitments this year under a 1988 agreement in which it pledged to secure approval from the US Congress for \$962 million in aid to Manila in the next two years.

Cheney, who is expected in Manila Monday and Tuesday, is on a four-nation trip to Asia to discuss proposed cutbacks in US military presence in the region.

Bush, on Aquino's request, sent F-4 Phantom jets on persuasion flights and helped her government quell the Dec 1-9 coup attempt, the sixth and gravest in her almost four years as president.

The United States maintains six military facilities in the Philippines, including the huge Clark Air Base and Subic Bay Naval complex, under a 1947 treaty expiring in 1991.

US Ambassador Nicolas Platt said Cheney will announce reductions at the San Miguel communications station and at Clark home of the 13th air force.

Five senators in interviews with United Press International defended Aquino's position on Cheney and criticised Bush for his statement which they regard as a rebuff to Aquino.

"Why should Bush be offended?" said Sen. Teodoro Guingona. "We have the right to be offended and not Bush because (the United States) have short-changed us from the beginning," Guingona said.

"I think President Aquino has put the Americans in their proper place," said Sen. Wigberto Tansada. "It is strange that after not respecting and complying with our constitution, our laws, our agreement with them, they even have the temerity to rebuke our president."

Opposition Senator Juan Ponce Enrile said, however, that Aquino "should not have precipitated and publicly stated she would not meet with (Cheney). After all, this man is representing her counterpart in the United States."

US officials yesterday warned US citizens to take "appropriate precaution" when travelling in the Philippines because of threats connected to the visit next week of Cheney.

A US state department advisory said travel to and from US military facilities in the Philippines remained normal but "a threat exists against US official personnel and facilities and travellers should take appropriate precaution."

The advisory also urged US citizens not to travel to the central island of Samar, the provinces of Lanao Del Sur, Sulu and Basilan in the south and Kalinao, Cagayan and Isabela in the north due to ongoing communist insurgency and criminal activity.

In other developments, police safely detonated a time bomb early today after it was found by a security guard at the entrance to the Makati Stock Exchange, officials said.

Police Maj. Remy Macaspac said the guard found the device at about 11 pm (1500 GMT) yesterday.



Philippine soldiers in full battle gear watch a basketball game Feb. 16. (Reuters wirephoto)



Filipino students belonging to the leftist 'Kadena' hold anti-US placards during a demonstration in Manila on Feb. 15. (Reuters wirephoto)

Abduction claim dismissed Setback for Imelda

NEW YORK, Feb. 16, (UPI) — A judge yesterday rejected a request to unseal secret documents that defence lawyers argued would support a claim that former Philippines First Lady Imelda Marcos and her late husband were kidnapped and brought "involuntarily" to the United States.

The ruling by US district court judge John Keenan marked a setback for Imelda, who is seeking to get federal racketeering charges against her dismissed based on the abduction claim.

In denying the request, Keenan said defence lawyers failed to prove that classified government documents would bolster the claim that the Marcoses were kidnapped by US military forces and taken to Hawaii after Ferdinand Marcos was ousted in February 1986.

Although Keenan has not yet ruled on the motion to throw out the charges against Imelda, the judge said the abduction claim was "completely belied" by a June 8, 1988, letter sent to president Reagan by the former Philippine leader.

In that letter, the judge noted, Marcos wrote how "we came to the United States at your invitation" and went on to state that "Imelda and I are grateful to you for the hospitality you extended to us more than two years ago."

"This is hardly the language of a kidnaper victim," the judge said in his 10-page ruling.

The Marcos letter was made public last year when prosecutors tried to discount the abduction claim, originally raised on the couple's 1986 and 1987 federal income tax returns.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Death penalty extended: Singapore intensified its anti-drug campaign Thursday by extending the death penalty to cover traffickers in cocaine, opium and marijuana.

Execution by hanging is now mandatory for anyone convicted of trafficking, manufacturing, importing or exporting more than 30 grammes (1.06 ounces) of cocaine, 500 grammes (17.6 ounces) of marijuana, 200 grammes (7.05 ounces) of heroin and 12 kilogrammes (26.4 pounds) of opium. Under the new law, possession of those amounts is equated with trafficking.

"We have contained the drug problem but it has not been eradicated. Drugs are still quite readily available in the region," said Poh Geok Ek, director of the central narcotics bureau.

Before the law was amended, the death penalty applied only to people convicted of trafficking in more than 15 grammes (0.5 ounces) of heroin and more than 30 grammes (1.06 ounces) of morphine. (AP)

Stripper-politician gets jail: Hsu Shao-tan, a lawmaker and a stripper-turned-politician, was sentenced on Friday to three months in prison for making a pornographic movie, court officials said.

Under Taiwan law, sentences of under six months can be settled by paying a fine — amounting in Hsu's case to only \$1,100 Taiwan dollars (\$310 US) — instead of serving the time. Hsu did not appear in court for the sentencing.

She admitted appearing in the movie but said the nude scenes were not of her body.

Hsu narrowly lost a race for a seat in parliament in December elections. One of her campaign slogans was: "Nipples against knuckles."

She is still awaiting judgement in another case brought after she took off her clothes in front of the legislature. (Reuters)

Seal Sofia ties: South Korea will establish formal diplomatic relations with Bulgaria when its

foreign minister visits Sofia next month, government officials said Friday.

Officials of both countries signed a protocol on diplomatic relations in Sofia on Thursday and agreed to establish formal diplomatic ties next month, they said.

South Korea approved a similar protocol with Czechoslovakia last month.

South Korean Foreign Minister Choi Ho-Joong plans to visit Sofia and Prague in mid-March to sign formal agreements to open relations with the two East European countries. (AP)

Queen heads home: Queen Elizabeth II and her husband, the Duke of Edinburgh, flew out of New Zealand on Friday after a 16-day visit.

Governor General Sir Paul Reeves, Prime Minister Geoffrey Palmer and a number of cabinet ministers were among those who gathered on the tarmac at Christchurch airport to farewell the royal couple.

Before entering the British Airways plane for the journey to London, the Queen, dressed in royal blue, turned and waved to a small crowd lining the airport viewing deck. (AP)

Malaysia won't apologise: Malaysia will not apologise to the world for laws that require the hanging of drug traffickers, Deputy Prime Minister Ghafar Baba said Thursday.

He said Kuala Lumpur also would not protest if other countries imposed similar sentences on Malaysians found guilty of trafficking abroad.

"We want the world to know about our firm stand. We do not need to apologise for having laws providing hanging to drug traffickers," he told a news conference.

"(US President George) Bush himself is now talking about hanging offenders. Some countries, not the United States, have criticised us for hanging people. We do not hang their people... we hang those who traffic in drugs. We don't care where they come from," he said.

Sino-UK deal on HK not enough

BEIJING, Feb. 16, (UPI) — A compromise between Britain and China on a mini-constitution for Hong Kong after it reverts to Chinese rule in 1997 is unlikely to restore the territory's shattered confidence, Hong Kong negotiators said yesterday.

The assessment came as officials clarified the confusing announcement Wednesday that agreement had been reached on key disputed issues in talks on the so-called basic law, the document by which Hong Kong will be governed after 1997.

China made some concessions on the pace and form of how the territory will become more democratic, Hong Kong negotiators said, but not enough to substantially ease fears that intensified after last year's Chinese crackdown on the pro-democracy movement.

"It's a little bit of improvement, bits and pieces," said Raymond Wu, a Hong Kong member of the committee drafting the mini-constitution.

"Every change is along the line of what Hong Kong people have asked for, but whatever changes (were made) will only satisfy a certain number of people to a certain degree," he said.

He also said it would take "a lot of other things" besides the basic law to restore confidence in the territory.

Britain and China had been unable to agree on the details of the basic law and have been negotiating behind the scenes before this week's round of talks, the final session on the document, concludes tomorrow.

The final draft is to be completed by the end of the five-day plenum for ratification by the Chinese government in March.

Wu told reporters the mainland-dominated group overseeing political affairs agreed to propose several amendments to the existing draft.

He said the number of directly elected seats in the territorial legislative council, known as Legco, will be increased to 20 in 1997 from 18. The figure represents 30 per cent of the legislature and is four seats short of Britain's latest proposal.

Wu said the 20 seat number was agreed without a vote by the majority of drafters. Asked whether there were proposals for a higher number of directly elected seats, Wu said, "No... because that seems to be the agreement."

There has been widespread speculation that Britain and China already have hammered out the details of the basic law, and Hong Kong drafters appeared resigned to the figures handed down for a final vote.

Burma detains 25 candidates

BANGKOK, Feb. 16, (AP) — Burma's military rulers have detained at least 25 opposition parliamentary candidates and hundreds of other dissidents in advance of promised elections. Western diplomats in Rangoon said today.

All 25 candidates had been held since Feb. 8. Most are members of the leading opposition group, the National League for Democracy, according to the diplomats, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

They said the candidates were all running in the May 27 election, which will be the first multiparty vote since 1960.

It was not clear for how long the candidates would be detained, or what charges they faced, if any, said the diplomats, reached by telephone from Bangkok. All the detained candidates were running for office in Rangoon.

Nujoma elected President

UN chief to swear in new leader on March 21

WINDHOEK, Feb. 16, (AP) — Sam Nujoma, leader of the South-West Africa People's Organisation for 30 years, was elected Namibia's first President today in preparation for the territory's independence March 21.

The 72-member constituent assembly unanimously elected Nujoma, who helped found Swapo in 1960 and led it through a 23-year bush war against South African rule of Namibia, formerly called South-West Africa.

"On behalf of the Namibian people and myself I want to express my sincere appreciation for the trust and honour you have bestowed upon me," Nujoma told the assembly. "Once again I call on all Namibians to remain united behind our government and work together for peace and stability."

Nujoma is to be sworn into office on independence day by United Nations Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar. Namibia's South African administrator Louis Pienaar will continue to be in charge of the territory until then.

South Africa, which has ruled Namibia since 1915, has agreed to grant the territory independence under a regional peace accord signed in 1988 with Angola and Cuba.

More than 6,000 UN military and civilian personnel have been monitoring the transition to independence, which began last April.

Former US Presidential candidate the Rev. Jesse Jackson attended the assembly session and was given time to address the members.

"I'm impressed by people civilised enough to agree and disagree," Jackson told the assembly. "This is an example of how a democratic society can work when people move from polarisation to coalition."

Jackson, who completed an eight-day visit to



Nujoma elected to be the first President of Namibia after independence. (Reuters wirephoto)

South Africa yesterday, said Namibia could become a "shining example" of democracy for South Africa.

Jackson, who has known Nujoma for many years, told the Namibian leader that "God has rewarded you for all your suffering."

The black US civil rights leader said he would urge the US government to increase aid to Namibia and other black-ruled countries in the region.

Leftist Swapo won 41 assembly seats in elections last November and six other parties captured the remaining 31 spots.

Missing Kenyan foreign minister found killed: body set alight

NAIROBI, Feb. 16, (UPI) — The body of Kenyan Foreign Minister Robert John Ouko, missing for three days, was found dead this afternoon near his home, the official Kenya News Agency announced.

He had apparently been murdered and his body set alight, according to police search team officials, who spoke on condition that they not be identified.

In an official statement, Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi expressed "profound sorrow" at Ouko's death.

Ouko, 57, vanished near his home at Koru in western Kenya, 180 miles (290 km) from the capital Nairobi, early Tuesday, and was sought in vain yesterday by government security forces.

The body was found six kilometres (four miles) from his home, Moi's statement said, in circumstances suggesting foul play.

Ouko disappeared in the early hour of Tuesday morning, but his absence was not discovered until late Wednesday, when he

failed to appear at Nairobi airport, from where he was to fly on an official visit to Gambia, ministry officials said.

In an earlier statement, Moi said he had then immediately launched a search for Ouko, and appealed for citizens with any information leading to his whereabouts to come forward.

Ouko's absence was first made public in a family appeal broadcast last night.

The 57-year-old minister of foreign affairs and international co-operation left

his home near Kisumu, in western Kenya, in the early hours of Tuesday morning.

He was due to fly the 150 miles (240 km) to the capital, Nairobi, ahead of his state visit.

According to a report in the official Kenya Times newspaper, he was picked up by a white car at 3 a.m., having told his staff he would leave early.

He had not been seen since. The newspaper said he had left his official briefcase and reading glasses behind in his bedroom.

Handwritten text in Arabic script: "هنا من الزوار"



Jackson meets Mandela

US Civil Rights leader Jesse Jackson met Nelson Mandela on Thursday and said the nationalist hero's relationship with South Africa's president was crucial to the country's future.

"I think President De Klerk and Nelson Mandela have started a relationship which could be the key," he said. Jackson (second from left) met Mandela for 45 minutes at the tiny home in the black township of Soweto where Mandela has decided to live since being freed from 27 years in jail on Sunday.

"I wish Martin Luther King could have been here for this moment," Jackson said, referring to the legendary civil

rights campaigner.

De Klerk's decision to free Mandela is aimed at breaking the political deadlock between South Africa's white minority and the disenfranchised black majority.

Mandela, said on Thursday he had never seen a facsimile machine and would like to have a look at one.

Jackson said Mandela was gently criticising media stories saying he enjoyed a luxurious life in the last months of imprisonment, including the use of modern communications devices such as fax machine.

Shown with Jackson and Mandela are his wives Winnie and Jacky (extreme right). (Reuters wirephoto)

ANC-Pretoria dialogue soon

Klerk asked to quit

LUSAKA, Feb 16, (Agencies): The African National Congress, fighting for black majority rule in South Africa, said today it would meet President F. W. de Klerk to help create a climate for negotiations.

ANC leaders ended three days of strategy talks, called after De Klerk freed their leader Nelson Mandela from 27 years' jail last Sunday.

The ANC, legalised by De Klerk this month after 30 years in exile in Zambia, said it recognised reforms announced by Pretoria but they had not gone far enough.

The ANC called on Pretoria to release all political prisoners, end a three-year-old state of emergency, repeal repressive legislation, halt political trials and remove troops from black townships.

It said it planned to send a delegation to meet De Klerk as soon as possible, comprising leaders from the Lusaka-based national executive committee as well as those based inside South Africa.

It would be the first meeting between the guerrilla movement's exiled leaders and a South African head of state. No date for the meeting was announced.

The ANC also said it would open offices in South Africa. There was no immediate comment from De Klerk's office.

The opposition Conservative Party charged today that De Klerk was spreading fear among whites with his plans to share power with blacks and called for his immediate resignation.

The right-wing party issued the call after thousands of its supporters marched through Pretoria last night in a major show of strength to demand new elections. Police said today up to 40,000 whites took part in the march.

De Klerk's decision to free black leader Nelson Mandela and legalise the African National Congress guerrilla movement has created fear and uncertainty among South African whites, the Conservative Party said in a statement in its newspaper, Die Patriot.

"With one stroke, great uncertainty about the future has been created. The voters have been lied to too often," the statement said.

"Hang F.W. de Klerk" and "keep South Africa white," said placards carried by protesters as they marched to a rally at which party leader Andries Treurnicht warned that the government faces a growing white backlash.

De Klerk had betrayed whites "by granting people with revolutionary aims, and who want to enslave others by means of violence, freedom of movement and the right to organise," Treurnicht told the cheering crowd.

The march and rally kicked off the conservatives' campaign to try and force elections to oust De Klerk for freeing Mandela.

Mandela today urged the international community to press South Africa to lift a three-year-old state of emergency and release all political prisoners.

The ANC leader made his call in an hour-long closed meeting, his first with ambassadors and senior diplomats of some 20 countries represented in South Africa.

Mandela told reporters after the meeting at a hotel outside Johannesburg that ANC policy demanded all countries break off relations with South Africa in protest against apartheid. But those who chose to remain had a role to play.

"Now they are here, they can do the work of trying to help to normalise the political situation in the country," he said.

Diplomats quoted him as saying they should urge Pretoria to lift emergency rule, which gives sweeping powers to police, and more particularly to secure release of all political prisoners.

Answering reporters' questions, Mandela said he had also appealed to the diplomats to ask their governments to intensify economic sanctions against South Africa.

Mandela said the foundations were almost in place for negotiations between his ANC and South African government.

Mercedes Benz workers have got permission to build Mandela a luxury saloon car — painted red — to show their admiration for the freed South African black leader.

Co-operate to prevent airlines bombings: US

PARIS, Feb 16, (AP) A US presidential panel urged closer Western co-operation yesterday to prevent airliner bombings and called for a tough response to nations sponsoring such attacks.

Ann McLaughlin, former US labour secretary and head of the commission, said at a news conference, a "common purpose exists to combat terrorism" and urged for more sharing of information to protect the travelling public.

US President George Bush created the commission on aviation, security, and terrorism last August as a result of the Dec 21, 1988 bombing of Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland.

The seven-member panel is travelling through Europe to sound out anti-terrorism policies. The panel arrived in

rights campaigner.

De Klerk's decision to free Mandela is aimed at breaking the political deadlock between South Africa's white minority and the disenfranchised black majority.

Mandela, said on Thursday he had never seen a facsimile machine and would like to have a look at one.

Jackson said Mandela was gently criticising media stories saying he enjoyed a luxurious life in the last months of imprisonment, including the use of modern communications devices such as fax machine.

Shown with Jackson and Mandela are his wives Winnie and Jacky (extreme right). (Reuters wirephoto)

Call to keep curbs on SA

ADDIS ABABA, Feb 16, (Agencies): The Organisation of African Unity urged government today to maintain economic sanctions against South Africa as pressure on Pretoria to scrap apartheid.

OAU Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim said international leaders should be wary, even though South African President F.W. de Klerk and taken "bold actions" in releasing African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela from jail and legalising his organisation.

He urged the world community "to heighten vigilance against being swept unwittingly by the euphoria of a semblance of change while the edifice of apartheid remains intact."

Salim praised US President George Bush and the European Economic Community for supporting current sanctions and attacked British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher for wanting to lift them.

Egypt, the current chairman of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), denied today it was pushing for the partial lifting of sanctions against South Africa.

Egypt's denial that it proposed the partial lifting of sanctions followed reports earlier this week that Cairo had secret diplomatic contacts with South Africa over the past two years, even though as a member of the OAU it was committed to the diplomatic isolation of Pretoria.

"It is necessary to maintain continuing sanctions against the Pretoria government until the democratic reforms that African freedom fighter Mandela wants are achieved," said Boutros Ghali, Egypt's minister of state for foreign affairs.

Japan will not relax economic sanctions against South Africa despite a request to do so from Thatcher, the Foreign Ministry said today.

A spokesman said Thatcher had sent a letter to Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu earlier this week.

President George Bush can lift US sanctions on trade with South Africa only with the approval of Congress, which he is not likely to get at this time. But there is a question how much difference the sanctions have made.

Herman Cohen, assistant secretary of State for Africa, said that "the legislation we're working under provides for relaxation of sanctions when there is progress. I think we're rapidly reaching that point, but we're not going to make any decisions until we've consulted very closely with the Congress..."

the French capital on Tuesday from West Germany and was scheduled to head to London later.

At the news conference, Sen. Frank Lautenberg, a New Jersey Democrat, urged western governments to strike back at any state proved involved in terrorist attacks on aviation.

"We have to let these states know we mean business," he said.

Investigators have suggested there might be an Iranian connection to the Lockerbie bombing, which killed all 259 people on board and 11 on the ground.

In the Sept 19 bombing of a UTA jumbo jet over Niger, investigators say they are convinced a Middle Eastern state was involved. French press reports have said it could be Libya.

Poland gets a bitter pill

Modrow in Warsaw talks on German unification

WARSAW, Feb 16, (Agencies): The prime ministers of Poland and East Germany opened talks today on German unification amid reports the United States and West Germany rejected Poland's request to join proposed talks on the subject.

East German Prime Minister Hans Modrow arrived on a one-day working visit and immediately started talks with his Polish counterpart, Tadeusz Mazowiecki.

The government newspaper Rzeczpospolita said Mazowiecki will also raise the problem of the restriction of Poles travelling in East Germany and harassment of Polish tourists in that country.

A Polish government source said Modrow will support Warsaw's effort to be included in proposed talks among World War II visitors — the Soviet Union, the United States, Britain and France — and the two German states.

Polish historians say Poland has the right to participate because it had one of the largest military forces among the alliance that defeated Hitler's Germany.

The Bonn government today rapped the East Berlin authorities for complaining about lack of West German financial support — the latest twist to a simmering row between the two states.

Through its criticism, the GDR (East Germany) seems to be trying to cover up for its own mistakes," West German government spokesman Dieter Vogel said.

"The West German government is not prepared to accept such criticism from members of the GDR (East German) government," he said at a news conference in Bonn.

Vogel made the remarks amid increasingly angry exchanges of words between Bonn and East Berlin.

The row started when members of Modrow's delegation, visiting Bonn earlier this week, claimed Modrow and they had been treated with scant respect and even humiliated.

Modrow himself expressed disappointment after his talks with West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, who he said had been unwilling to discuss concrete steps toward German unity.

Rudolf Seiters, a senior aide to the chancellor, today angrily rejected the criticism and said "the talks were more productive than many people want to admit now."

West German Finance Minister Theo Waigel had earlier dismissed Modrow's and his ministerial delegation as "a transitional government with no free range for negotiating."

East Germany firmly rejected yesterday the idea that monetary union with West Germany was imminent, saying anyone suggesting this was deceiving the public.

Briefing journalists the day after Modrow's return from talks in Bonn, government spokesman Wolfgang Meyer said a hasty approach to German unification could be disastrous for East Germany and Europe as a whole.

Mazowiecki described his first session with Modrow as "fruitful," the official PAF news agency reported.

"Both speakers in an open way expressed their views on the subject of the process which in the last few months has been developing and is leading to the reunification of Germany," Mazowiecki told PAF.

This process has to take into consideration the "full security of the rights of German neighbours," Mazowiecki said.

Poland doesn't have to take part in everything but it has to take part in everything that concerns Poland, it has to be present," he added, according to the PAF report.

Sessions were also planned with President Wojciech Jaruzelski and Modrow was to address the foreign affairs committees of the two houses of parliament.

The European Economic Community said today it would hold a special summit in April to discuss problems of German unification.

But the Solidarity newspaper Gazeta Wyborcza said Washington "rejected Poland's proposal in an elegant way" to avoid discouraging Mazowiecki before his trip to the United States in March.

The armed forces newspaper Zolnierz Wolnosci said the rejection was a "bitter pill" for Poland.

"For the second time in the history, someone else will decide about us without us," it said in reference to the 1945 Potsdam agreement that fixed European borders following the end of World War II.

Poland lost six million people during World War II and suffered the most ruin of any country at the hands of the German-led axis alliance.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Jacuzzi gives woman huge lovebite: A Swedish woman who got stuck in a Jacuzzi's suction system on Thursday was taken to hospital — with back pains and a huge "lovebite" on her bottom.

Physician Jan Wellander said the shocked woman had not been able to break loose from the suction system in the public Jacuzzi until it was turned off.

He said the Jacuzzi had given her a suction mark measuring 20 by 30 cm (eight by 12 inches). He urged other Jacuzzi bathers to be careful.

"It was the biggest lovebite I've ever seen," he said. (Reuters)

Dutch magazine banned: A popular Dutch magazine which told its readers they could print their own money easily on colour copying machines was banned by a court on Thursday.

"We'll have to withdraw all copies in 48 hours or face fines of 50,000 to 500,000 guilders (\$25,000 to 250,000)," Aktuel magazine editor Pieter de Vries said after the court ruling.

The Dutch central bank sought the court order, saying the weekly magazine's disclosure was against the public interest and gave detailed information on how to forge money. (Reuters)

26 million Soviet died in WW II: A senior Kremlin official said yesterday that more than 26 million Soviet people died in World War Two, six million more than previously assumed, but Moscow had never made the figure public.

Soviet dead during the war had previously been put at around 20 million. Hitler's armies invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, and the country suffered heavier casualties than any other.

Valentin Falin, an adviser to President Mikhail Gorbachev, member of the Soviet Union's parliament, told a meeting in Brussels that 26,340,000 Soviet citizens died during the war. (Reuters)



Bomb blast

A bomb blast in a Brussels University lecture theatre injured about 40 medical students yesterday, officials said.

Three students were badly burned in the blast which brought down part of the ceiling and started a fire.

Police and fire brigade officials said the bomb was planted in the fourth row from the back of the auditorium in the medical faculty at the French-speaking Catholic University of Louvain.

A lecture theatre at another university, the free University of Brussels (ULB), was blasted by a suitcase bomb in December. Three people were injured, two of them seriously. Pictures show bomb experts search for clues. (Reuters wirephoto)

Communism's dead in Romania: Premier

BUCHAREST, Feb 16, (Reuters): Communism is dead in Romania, the country's debonair young Prime Minister Petre Roman insists, but ordinary Romanians are still not sure.

"How can the people say we are just another communist government when all the facts show otherwise?" Roman said, when asked why many remained suspicious of the interim leadership that took power after the December revolution and execution of dictator Nicolae Ceausescu.

"The Communist Party and communist ideology in Romania are both dead," the prime minister said, in an exclusive interview with Reuters.

"We are a government of technicians who were chosen



Photo of the year

The picture of a lone Chinese demonstrator facing a column of tanks during the June crackdown of the popular uprising in Beijing won the 1990 World Press Photo Award yesterday.

The photo was made by Charlie Cole, a staff photographer with the US magazine Newsweek.

"The picture symbolises the events of 1989... it's the individual standing up to a repressive regime, to a military juggernaut," said Michael Rand, art director of London's Sunday Times magazine and chairman of the nine-member World Press Photo jury.

Established in 1955, the World Press Photo award is one of the most prestigious prizes in photojournalism. This year, 11,047 pictures were submitted by 1,280 photographers from 64 countries. Rand told reporters here. Picture shows a student standing in front of Chinese army tank in Beijing. (Reuters wirephoto)

Train accident kills 3: An overnight express bound from Milan, Italy, to Paris rammed a railway maintenance train early yesterday, killing three people and injuring 12, authorities said.

Two 16-year-old Italian girls were hospitalised with unspecified serious injuries, along with six other Italian passengers, three French and a Turkish railway worker.

Killed were the train engineers, both Swiss, and a 19-year-old Swiss passenger, son of the passenger train's conductor, Swiss Federal Railways chief Claude Roux told reporters.

He said the "Galici" express had a green light and was travelling at 120 km (75 miles) per hour when it hit the maintenance train from behind in this southwestern Swiss town. The engine and six sleeping cars originating in Venice and Florence derailed. (AP)

Witchdoctor's cure for Aids: Parliament was told Wednesday there was no truth to widespread rumours that an African witchdoctor was advising Aids victims they could be cured by raping white women.

"The story... is nothing more than rumour-mongering at its worst," Home Affairs Minister Mervyn Mahachi, who is in charge of police, told lawmakers.

The minister was answering a formal question in the national assembly for Andrew Holland, a white member of parliament who is also an official of President Robert Mugabe's ruling Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front) party.

Holland asked whether it was correct that a traditional healer, commonly known as a witchdoctor, had been urging sufferers of the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome in the northern Zimbabwe town of Karoi they would be free of the disease if they raped white women.

Minister Mahachi said he deplored the racial connotations of the question.

Zimbabwe, a former British colony, has 100,000 whites and nearly nine million blacks.

At first, Holland made no reference to "white" women in his query. (AP)

Soviets leaving Prague in 10 days

PRAGUE, Feb 16, (Reuters): Soviet troops will start leaving Czechoslovakia in 10 days, the Communist Party trade union daily Prace said today.

The Soviet Union has 75,000 troops and some dependants stationed in Czechoslovakia following a Soviet-led Warsaw Pact invasion in August 1968 which ended the Prague spring liberalisation era under Alexander Dubcek.

The paper said the military pullout would start on Feb 26 and a substantial part of the Russian military force would be withdrawn by May 31.

Prace said the pullout date was agreed at a meeting of Czechoslovak and Soviet experts who started negotiating the timetable and technical details of a troop withdrawal last month.

For many Czechoslovaks now led by a reformist government, the Soviet officers and soldiers are no longer welcome.

Thousands of citizens have demonstrated in recent weeks to demand that the Soviet troops leave at once. In one protest 30,000 massed in Prague shouting "Ivan, go home!"

The hardline communist leaders who invited Warsaw Pact troops to throttle the Dubcek-era reforms surrendered power last November after huge street protests.

Czechoslovakia was the first Warsaw Pact state occupied by Soviet forces to open talks on their withdrawal.

It flatly told Moscow it wanted the first contingent to go before free elections in June and the rest out by the end of the year.

Solidarity leader Lech Walesa, said yesterday he wants Soviet troops out of Poland "as soon as possible."

The Solidarity-led government of Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki has adopted a go-slow attitude toward Soviet withdrawal, saying the 40,000 troops in Poland should leave only after a new security arrangement is created for Europe.

But Walesa has insisted the Red Army withdraw this year.

"I will continue activities so that the Soviet troops are removed from Poland as soon as possible," Walesa told reporters at the headquarters of Solidarity's parliamentary caucus, the Citizen's Parliamentary Club.

Referring to suggestions from President Wojciech Jaruzelski and the pro-Solidarity newspaper Gazeta Wyborcza that the troops help ensure Poland's security against a reunified Germany, the Solidarity union chairman said:

Ethnic Albanians protest in Kosovo

BELGRADE, Feb 16, (Reuters): Hundreds of ethnic Albanians staged fresh protests today in Yugoslavia's southern province of Kosovo, where 29 people have been killed in riots over the past month. Tanjug news agency reported.

It said some 500 ethnic Albanians marched through Titova Mitrovica towards the town's high school and called for pupils to join them.

The past month's strife has been the worst surge of violence in Yugoslavia since Albanians rioted last March against curbs on the autonomy of Kosovo, part of the country's biggest republic, Serbia.

Ethnic Albanians, who make up 30 per cent of Kosovo's population, demand greater regional autonomy and the signature of the province's Serbian-controlled leaders.

On the cards

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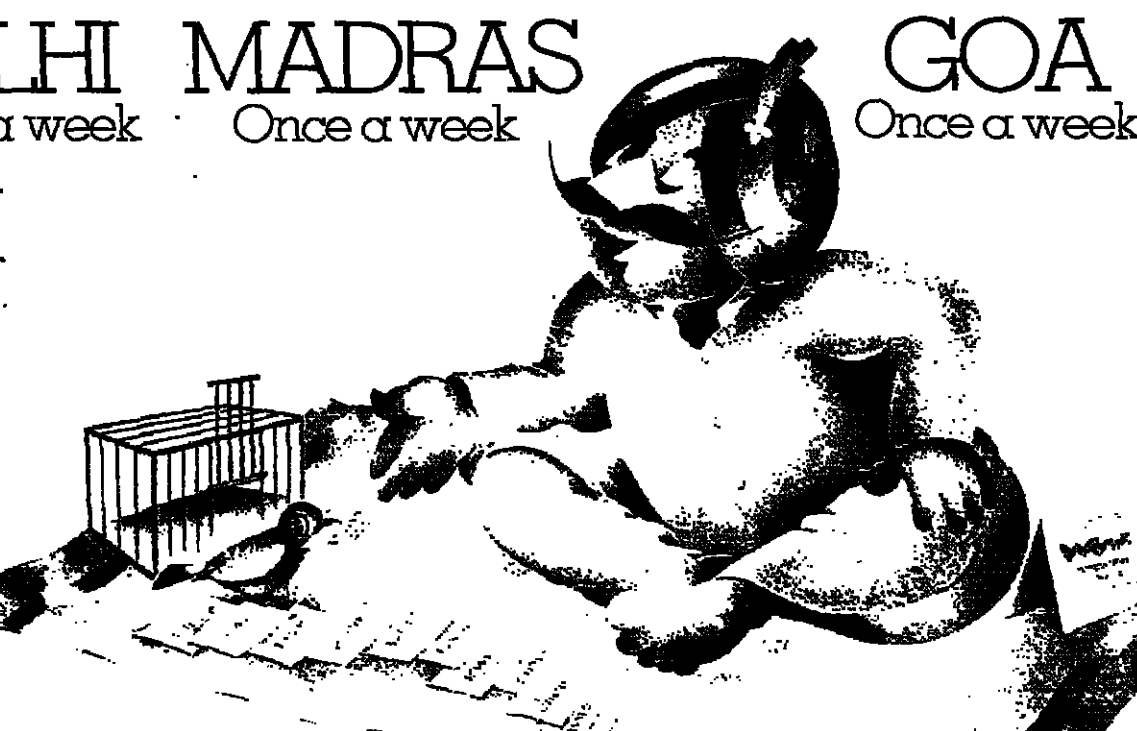
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National Day celebrations officially begin today

Flag hoisting at Green Island

KUWAIT, Feb 16, (Kuna): The country's celebrations of the 29th National Day Anniversary will begin Saturday, Feb 17, with the hoisting of the flag in the Green Island at the sea-front.

Assistant secretary for external information and secretary of the standing committee for celebration of national occasions Ridha Al Faily said the hoisting of the flag would take place amid official and popular celebrations with the participation of government units and folklore troupes.

Faily said rescue teams, fire brigades and coast guards would organise marine shows on the occasion.

Recalling statements by Information

Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al Hamad Al Sabah, Faily reiterated that participation of the citizens in the National Day celebration is the most important factor in observing the occasion.

Faily said the committee had prepared quantities of photos of HH the Amir and HH Crown Prince and Premier in addition to posters and flags for distribution to the public.

Exhibition

Meanwhile, the Embassy of Kuwait in Brazil inaugurated a week-long exhibition to mirror the Kuwaiti civilisation in particular and the Arabs' in general to

people living in the country.

Minister of culture in the Brazilian Goias state, where the exhibition is currently taking place, said such a cultural event is a unique civilised phenomenon, attracting hundreds of Brazilians to get acquainted with the Arab and Kuwaiti traditions.

She stressed that the Arab civilisation played a prominent role in the maturity of the world's civilisation in general and in Brazil in particular.

The Brazilian minister also highlighted the co-operative spirit of the Arab immigrants who enriched Brazilian civilisation.

For his part, Kuwaiti Ambassador to

Brazil, Faisal Al Gais, said the show is a salute of friendship from the people of Kuwait to the Brazilian people.

Friendship

The ambassador also spoke about development of Kuwaiti culture and art as well as the role of cultural communication in enhancing friendship and peace among people of the world.

The exhibition, the first of its kind in Latin America, consists of 30 paintings of three prominent Kuwaiti artists, besides pictures and drawings reflecting Kuwait in the past and present.

As part of activities and events designed to celebrate Kuwait's 29th National

Day, a special exhibition on architectural designs from the Mamluk period in Jerusalem was opened here Wednesday. The exhibition is co-organised by the British Council and the Islamic Artifacts Society (IAC) and is now open for public display at the society's headquarters in Kuwait City.

Many specialists and officials attended the inauguration ceremony which was addressed by the chairman of the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fisheries Sheikh Ibrahim Al Duaij and the Director of IAC Sheikh Hissa Sabah Al-Sabah.

Kuwait National Day will be observed on the 25th of this month.

Kuwaiti orphanage for Afghan children

Foundation stone laid

ISLAMABAD, Feb 16, (Kuna): Governor of North West Frontier Province Amir Gulistan Janjua laid the foundation stone of a Kuwaiti-sponsored project of an orphanage for Afghan refugees in Peshawar yesterday morning.

In his speech before a large distinguished gathering at the project site, 12 kilometres from Peshawar city, he thanked the government and the people of Kuwait for taking care of Afghan refugees in an elaborate manner.

Janjua said by financing the Rs 2.5 million orphanage project Kuwaitis had performed a "noble and sacred act." He noted that Kuwait had been continuously supporting the cause of the Afghan people from the very beginning.

The NWFP governor said that both the rulers and the people of Kuwait were true followers of Islamic teachings, especially in their compassion for Muslim people in misery.

This project, aimed at the welfare of orphans of Afghan mujahedeen, was a shining example of their practical love for the Muslim people, he said.

Kuwait-based Lajnat Al D'awa Al Islamiah has launched the project, through its regional office in Peshawar, spread over an area of 17,000 square metres on the grand trunk road on the way to Islamabad. The orphanage will accommodate 500 orphans. A provision has been kept for future expansion to accommodate 300 more orphans.

Representatives

Due to completion in 1992, the orphanage named 'Kuwait Al Khair Orphanage', will, among others, have a block for classrooms and a block for carpentry, tailoring, shoe-making, plumbing, mechanical and technical training besides playgrounds, hostels and administrative block.

Prominent amongst those who attended the ceremony held at the project site near Nassipur Colony in the outskirts of Peshawar city were president of Afghan mujahedeen interim government Professor Sighatullah Mujaddadi, Kuwait Ambassador in Pakistan Qasim Omer Al Yaqout, Yemen Ambassador in Pakistan, other Arab diplomats and representatives of United Nations agencies located in Peshawar.

Also present was a group of officials from Kuwait led by Abdul Qadir A. Ajeel, director of Kuwait-based Baitul Zakat which made a substantial contribution in financing the project through Lajnat Al D'awa Al Islamiah (Society of Social Reform).

Speaking on the occasion, Professor Mujaddadi lauded the people of Kuwait "for supporting the Afghan jihad from the very beginning."

"I thank the Kuwaitis for this solid support to Afghan mujahedeen," said the Afghan leader, noting that besides this orphanage, Kuwait had set up various other welfare projects in Pakistan for Afghan refugees and mujahedeen. These fields included education and vocational training, he said.

The orphans, Prof. Mujaddadi told the distinguished gathering, were the sons of those Afghan mujahedeen who fell while fighting a superpower on their soil.

Sheikh Zahid, the regional manager of Lajnat Al D'awa Al Islamiah, based in Peshawar, in his introductory address, said: "We are constructing this project for sheltering orphans of our Afghan brothers who sacrificed their lives. It is our modest contribution towards supporting the Islamic cause. No doubt the problem of Afghanistan is the problem of all the Muslims of the world. We should not leave them alone especially at this time."

Welfare

The Lajnat representative further said: "These orphans are our children. Their fathers laid down their lives because of us. Afghans were defending Islam on their land on behalf of Islamic Ummah. These orphans are the future of the Ummah and they must be protected and looked after well, said Sheikh Zahid."

Addressing the gathering on the occasion, Dr Mohammed Saleem, chairman of the Pakistani 'Dawatul Islami Trust Peshawar', said Kuwait was the leading Islamic state which had done comprehensive work for the well-being and welfare of Afghan refugees and mujahedeen in the North West Frontier Province. The Kuwaitis, he said, had established projects like clinics, hospitals, vocational centres, educational institutions and primary healthcare units for Afghan refugees.

"In this way the Kuwaitis are preparing Afghan manpower for the post-freedom period," said Dr Saleem, whose trust is collaborating locally with Lajnat in the execution of the project.



Palestinian children's appeal

Palestinian children in Kuwait on Thursday appealed to the Soviet Union, China and France to do their utmost to check the mass exodus of Soviet Jews to Israel and prevent Israel from settling the immigrants in occupied Arab territories.

The plea came in memos they delivered today to the embassies of the three countries.

The memo noted that the freedom cause was inseparable, stressed that the Palestinians have the right to return and that no one else was entitled to settle in their homeland under circumstances of occupation.

"The most dangerous thing about the emigration of Soviet Jews is that it comes within the framework of perestroika (reconstruction) and under the US umbrella of man's freedom at a time it closed its doors in front of Jew immigrants to force them to head to occupied Palestine," read the memo.

It urged the three countries to exert every possible effort to spur peace process and put pressure on Israel to withdraw from occupied Arab territories, recognising Palestinian national rights and stop atrocities against Palestinian people inside the occupied land. Picture shows Soviet Ambassador Ernest Zverev receiving the memo.

Ernest Zverev receiving the memo.

Thais step up search for missing Saudi

Newspaper closed for inflammatory headline

BANGKOK, Feb 16, (Agencies): Police in Thailand expanded their search Thursday for a missing Saudi Arabian businessman whose disappearance followed the murders of three Saudi embassy officials earlier this month.

Police found the empty car of Mohammad Al Ruwaili in the parking lot of a local hospital on Thursday but there was no sign of him. They said the car had been there for three days.

They said Ruwaili, a partner in a company sending Thais to work in Saudi Arabia, disappeared on Monday shortly after telling his wife by telephone he was leaving his office for home.

The Thai media have speculated that a labour racket was behind the murders as the three slain Saudis were partly responsible for processing visas of Thai workers going to Saudi Arabia.

The media said the murders were the second incident possibly connected with the labour export business. A Saudi embassy official holding a related job was shot dead here in January last year and the case remained unsolved.

Police said Ruwaili's Sincere International Recruitment Company was one of the several dozen job placement agencies in Thailand that specialised in sending local workers to Saudi Arabia and other Middle East countries.

Major-General Thanoo Hom-haul, deputy chief of Bangkok's

Metropolitan Police, told reporters Ruwaili's apartment was in the same central Bangkok area where one of the three Saudi embassy officials was killed by unidentified gunmen two weeks ago.

The Saudi embassy's consul, second secretary and a communications staff member were shot dead on Feb 1 at two different locations about 1.5 km (one mile) apart within five minutes of one another.

He said local newspapers and television stations had been asked to carry a picture of the 32-year-old businessman who has lived here for at least four years.

Employment agency sources said Ruwaili also ran a business selling airline tickets to people travelling between Thailand and the Middle East.

Police said they had not determined whether the murders were politically motivated or linked to business conflicts in lucrative export of Thai labour to oil-rich Saudi Arabia.

Riyadh has suspended issuing new visas to Thais seeking to work in Saudi Arabia since the murders this month but it has failed to carry out an initial threat to recall its envoys.

The labour department said some 130,000 Thais were working in Saudi Arabia and they accounted for about a quarter of the total number of Thais working abroad.

Police said Thursday they have shut down a Thai-language newspaper for its reporting on

the murder of three Saudi Arabian diplomats in Bangkok two weeks ago.

The newspaper *Naew Na* was banned Wednesday for printing what police said was a false headline on the Feb 1 killings.

National police chief Sawang Thirasawat said the paper would be closed indefinitely, reported Lt Col Samphan Sreethaphon of the police department's press censorship division.

The headline was "Saudi Arabian diplomats to be arrested for ordering killings of three compatriots," which appeared in the Feb 8 edition, Samphan said.

In a statement ordering the closure, Sawang said the headline was irresponsible and was damaging to relations between Thailand and Saudi Arabia, he said.

It also would affect the safety of Thais working in Saudi Arabia, he said.

Naew Na could appear against the ban, he said. Arys Prateep Na Thalang, news editor of *Naew Na*, said the paper already had lodged an appeal.

"We are sure we can fight this because there are laws and a democratic government," he said.

The article accompanying the headline said the killings resulted from a conflict between Saudi diplomats who were cashing in on the export of Thai labour to the Middle East.

Naew Na, founded in 1980, has a daily circulation of 700,000 and a staff of 200, Arys said.

Spate of thefts in Qurain: residents

A NUMBER of Qurain residents have called upon officials to take the necessary measures to prevent incidents of theft in the area.

They added that Asian labourers living in the area rob their houses using screw drivers and breaking windows during morning hours. A local daily interviewed a number of residents in Qurain in order to enlighten their plight.

Abdullah Al Tannak said the large number of Asians in the area have caused a lot of problems and disturbance. He stated that Asian labourers, particularly Chinese, rob their houses which they moved two months ago search for jobs.

"We blamed companies and other establishments for not offering this section of manpower decent salaries which makes them steal and in turn reflects on residents. He pointed out that most of the bachelor labourers live in sheds near families. He said that he was forced to deposit all of his money in the bank in order to avoid any incidents he may have been subjected to.

Tannak indicated that most Qurain internal roads lack adequate lighting adding that the area also lacks telephone services. He called upon officials

at the Ministry of Interior to intensify the number of security patrols in the area.

Abdul Ghani Al Mwalli's house was robbed during the afternoon. He came to his house that day and was surprised to see his living room entrance broken. He said that when he got to his bedroom he found his safe wide open and all his papers on the floor, in addition to some blood spots.

He was lucky that his money was not stolen because it was hidden somewhere else. He is sure that the robber watched them until they left the house and used the back fence of the house to get inside. He stated that it is hard to notice such suspicious moves because the area is full of Asian labourers.

He said that one of the officials informed him that there are only four security patrols in the area. He said the area requires stronger security patrolling during late night hours.

Adnan Saleh Al Swaisan called upon the Ministry of Interior to intensify its security patrols in the area and demanded contracting companies in the area to control their labourers and to send the extra manpower back to their countries. He stated that the responsibility is shared evenly between companies and the Ministry of Interior.

404 convert to Islam

THE Ministry of Justice announced that 404 non-Muslims embraced Islam in Kuwait during 1989. According to statistics, 312 were of Asian nationalities, 31 Arabs, 26 Europeans, 12 Americans and the balance of unidentified nationalities.

According to religion, 315 of the converts were originally Christians, 41 Buddhists, 39 Hindus, two Dursi and the balance atheists.

Meanwhile, the head of Islamic documentation section at the Ministry of Justice, Abdul Aziz Al Mijren said that anyone who desires to convert to Islam should come to the Justice Palace with two witnesses and declare that there is no God, but Allah and Mohammed (PBUH) is His Messenger before an accredited judge. Official documents declaring the applicant as having been converted to Islam will then be provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he said.

Eritrean official warns of anti-Arab pact

KUWAIT, Feb 16, (Kuna): An anti-Arab, Ethiopian-Israeli pact is in the making and Arabs should take urgent action to counter it, warned the senior Eritrean official in a statement.

Israel and Ethiopia, which restored diplomatic relations late last year, are co-operating on more levels than one, with Israel seeking access to strategic Red Sea ports, according to executive committee member of the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) Mohammed Ali Labab.

The Eritrean official was quoted by Kuwaiti daily Al Seyassa as saying Israel would supply Ethiopia with \$700 million and cluster bombs in exchange for the right to use the Ethiopian Red Sea Island of Dahlak, opposite the Saudi and Yemeni coasts.

Control over the island would give Israel strategic command on the Red Sea shipping route, he warned.

He said Israeli military personnel had already set up eavesdropping equipment and naval installations on the Dahlak island.

The Eritrean officials would not rule out that Israel might deploy missile batteries on the island to threaten oilfields in the Arab Gulf area.

Under the same deal, the Ethiopian government would allow more Ethiopian Jews (Falashas) to migrate to the Jewish state, almost certainly to be resettled in Arab territories occupied by Israel.

Labab confirmed earlier reports that Israeli experts were helping Ethiopia in studies on possible diversion of the Blue Nile, a major tributary that feeds the river Nile, which streams down to Sudan and Egypt.

Labab said some 400 Israeli experts had replaced as many East German specialists working in Ethiopia in part of the growing co-operation between the two sides.

Action Line

MY WIFE has been working in a company on visa No. 18. She is not willing to work. Is it possible to change her residence to my sponsorship — that is get visa No. 22? If yes, what documents do I require and which ministry must be approached?

Amjad Khan

IF YOU are eligible under the salary requirements rules and earn KD650 in the private sector and KD450 in the public sector, then you can sponsor your wife. For this, you'll have to cancel the visa No. 18, send her back to your country and call her on the fresh dependent visa.

If you can sponsor her, under the rules, you'll have to submit an attested copy of the marriage certificate, a copy of her passport and photographs and a salary certificate, recently issued by your employer, to the immigration department. If the application meets the regulations, a visa No. 22 may be granted by the immigration authorities.

I AM contract worker (domestic helper). I have been working with my employer for three years and four months. Am I entitled to get two months vacation and my plane ticket. In case my employer doesn't give them, can I claim them? My employer said they would give me my benefits in January but they didn't. I'm planning to take my vacation four months before my contract finishes. Please advise.

T.S.B.

IF YOU have a contract, it must be followed, and you are entitled to get your benefits according to the contract. Vacation, plane ticket and other benefits must have been included in the contract. The matter must be dealt with according to the contract. As you must be aware, domestic helpers are not covered by the private sector labour. They come under the civil law. If the employer has not paid you, and the payment has been mentioned in the contract, you can file a case in the civil court to claim your rights.

I AM an Indian married to a Filipino in Kuwait. My wife was living in Kuwait on a domestic visa. After our marriage, her visa was cancelled and I sent her to India. My wife has been living in India. She holds Filipino nationality. I would like to bring her back to Kuwait on a work visa No. 18. Do I have to send her to the Philippines to complete the formalities? Can I bring her to Kuwait from India?

Michael

NORMALLY, work visa formalities must be completed in the country of origin. If you obtain a no objection certificate for her then the normal procedure is that the immigration authorities inform the Kuwait Embassy in the country of origin, where the formalities are to be completed. She'll have to return to the Philippines to endorse papers. I suggest you make enquiries with the authorities to find out if there are any other possibilities.

THANKS for your kind and humanitarian services toward the expatriates by answering queries through your columns, to which we are all indebted.

Many people came to Kuwait some decades ago and since then, they have been staying here with their families. Their children were born here, brought up and educated here. These senior expatriates have maintained excellent moral character and working records.

One question disturbs my mind. I notice that on the issue of iqamas, both the senior and the junior expatriates are treated at the same level. Both can be exposed to similar punishment in the event of delays in renewing iqamas due to unforeseen circumstances beyond their control.

I understand that it should apply to new candidates but fail to understand why it is done to senior expatriates. Expatriates who have been staying for three decades or more, I feel, deserve a certain flexibility of rules from a government that enjoys a reputation for its humanitarian services.

Please look into the matter so that we senior expatriates are taken care of and justified in the light of your good offices.

F.F. Zaki

YOUR letter was addressed to the Legal Clinic. I went through it and did not find any specific query. You are commenting on the law, which has to be applied across the board. That, I feel, is the purpose of the law. There cannot be one law for one section of expatriates and another for another. If there is any specific query, any doubts about the law or you need a clarification, I'd be happy to answer your question.

I WOULD like to know if it is possible to bring my mother to Kuwait as my dependent. My father recently passed away. If it is possible, please advise me of the procedures that should be followed, what is the salary requirement and whether it is possible to combine my husband's as well my salary to meet salary requirement. I would appreciate your response.

S. Rodrigues

A MOTHER cannot be sponsored as a dependent. Dependent visas are issued only for wives and children of expatriates earning a specific salary in the public and private sectors. The salary requirement is KD650 in the private and KD450 in the public sectors. But only those expatriates who wish to bring their families — wife and children — can apply for such visas. There is no provision in the law to call parents — mother of father — on dependent visa. However, you could try to get a visit visa and call her for a brief period. A visit visa is valid for a month.

I AM planning to leave Kuwait permanently in April. My family left Kuwait in Oct 1989 and will not return. Will staying out of Kuwait for more than six months automatically cancel their iqamas?

S.K. Khan

THE residence of an expatriate who stays out of Kuwait for a period of more than six months is cancelled. In other words, they cannot re-enter Kuwait. In the case of your family, they would not be eligible to re-enter the country after March. However, it would be necessary to cancel your residence permit, if you are leaving for good. At the time of leaving, you can also inform the immigration department that your family has left Kuwait.

If you have a problem, we will try to help the best we can. Drop in a line to Action Line, Arab Times, P.O. Box 2270, 13023 Safat, Kuwait or fax your questions to us on Tel: 4847495.



New training courses at Paaet

Two new training courses started Wednesday at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training for government employees in all fields. The first course on preparing trainees include 17 students who are employed at different government establishments like the Ministry of Electricity and Water, the Ministry of Defence, the General Fire Fighting Department, the Technical Studies College and the Public Authority for Education and Training. The course was opened by the director of the Training Planning and Co-ordination Department, Mansour Al Meshal who gave a speech on the occasion welcoming all students. The course will include several subjects on training methods, and theoretical and practical training plans. It will last until March 18, 1990.

The second course will cover the subject on the role and duties of the administrative supervisor. This course is held for the interest of the Ministry of Public Health and will include 20 students.

قانون العمل

Kuwait actively participates in Expolangues

Computerised system for Arabic displayed

PARIS, Feb 16, (Kuna). For the second consecutive year Kuwait is taking part in the international exhibition of languages, cultures, communications and publishing (Expolangues) held in Paris from 14 to 19 February.

In that forum aimed at bringing together richness of the world's different languages and cultures, high level linguistic research programmes and pedagogical methods, Kuwait together with Morocco

represented the Arab world.

The exhibition was inaugurated Wednesday by the Minister of State for National Education, Research and Sports, Lionel Jospin, who visited the Kuwaiti stand and was received by the cultural attaché in Paris, Abdul Latif Al Bajan. Jospin expressed his pleasure to see that Kuwait was actively participating in that annual exhibition, and the same satisfaction was voiced by Thierry de Beauce, the

junior minister in charge of international relations at the Foreign Ministry, who followed the state minister at the Kuwaiti stand.

System

Bajan said that the information and higher education ministries and the University of Kuwait have helped staff at the Kuwaiti Cultural Bureau in Paris organise the exhibition.

This year, he went on, Kuwait has more

books displayed, notably concerning Arab civilisation and culture, methods of teaching and learning Arabic, and a computerised system to learn Arabic.

There are a total of 250 participants at this 8th Expolangues exhibition, representing some 30 countries with about 60 different languages.

Organisers are expecting about 40,000 visitors this year, compared with between 30,000 and 35,000 in 1989.



A lab assistant checks the purity of Perrier at a food inspection department in Rotterdam.



Perrier chairman Gustave Leven seen moments prior to announcing world-wide withdrawal of contaminated bottles.

Yuppie tippie hits troubled times

Eau Perrier!

By Jadranka Porter
Arab Times staff

KUWAIT pulled the fizzy Perrier mineral water from all stores and restaurants Thursday while Health Ministry laboratories began tests to determine whether supplies to Kuwait have been contaminated.

The move comes after the French company announced Wednesday it was withdrawing its familiar green bottles from markets around the world after the discovery of contamination by a toxic solvent.

While Kuwait Municipality inspectors were making rounds of the supermarkets last week the Health Ministry appealed to international organisations for help. Inquiries were sent to the World Health Organisation, Food and Agriculture Organisation and the US Food and Drug Administration, Dr Abdul Rahman Al Awadi, the planning minister and acting minister of health, has said.

Co-operative societies report that they withdrew the water from shelves before the worldwide recall saying that sales dropped dramatically after the first press reports about contamination in the US.

The Sultan Center in Salmiya, one of the most popular food retail outlets in Kuwait which used to sell some 30 cases of Perrier a day, removed the water from its shelves Thursday after being instructed to do so by the Perrier agent and the municipality.

The supermarket, which is now stuck with a stock of between 100 and 175 cases, said Perrier was among the most popular drinks on its shelves.

Raad Stores, the Perrier importer, was not available for comment during the weekend. The Safeway store in Farwaniya confirmed it withdrew the water from the supermarket after a visit by municipality officials.

The Kuwait Meridien, which belongs to the French chain of hotels, also stopped serving Perrier Thursday according to its food and beverage manager who declined any further comment.

But another Meridien manager said Perrier was not the hotel's guests' favourite drink. Plain mineral water and fresh fruit juices, he said, were by far more popular.

The Perrier health scare snowballed after small traces of benzene were found in bottles in the US state of North Carolina prompting Perrier to withdraw the water from stores across the US on Feb 9. The recall was extended Wednesday to the rest of the world after reports of contamination in Europe. Announcing the recall at a news conference in Paris, Perrier top executives said it was caused by small amounts of a toxic gas that by mistake passed through a dirty filter contaminating some bottles.

Associated Press adds: Perrier President Gustave Leven told a news conference the company took the step because "half-measures were not possible."

"We don't want the least doubt, as minimal as it might be, to weigh on the image of the quality and purity of our product," Leven said, calling the contamination a "human error."

But only part of the production will be withdrawn from the French market after a preliminary ruling by Health Ministry authorities that it poses no danger to the public, Leven said.

The recall will affect another

120 countries that consume the popular water, Perrier officials said, estimating it could cost the company around 200 million francs (\$35 million).

Source: Perrier SA stock has plunged 279 francs (\$49) from Friday's closing price of 1,413 francs (\$248). The recall was announced at the close of trading Wednesday.

Managing Director Frederik Zimmer said importers will be advised to dump some 160 million bottles of the water on site and return the bottles to the company for cleaning and refilling.

Distribution should return to normal throughout most of the world within 2-12 months, Zimmer said, with the new bottles showing the date when they were filled.

Computer-controlled instruments will measure Benzene levels in the water to prevent any recurrence of the contamination, he said.

Benzene, a chemical used in cleaning solvents, entered the water in trace amounts when workers failed to change a pipe filter at Perrier's natural spring at Vergèze in southern France.

The water and the natural carbon dioxide gas that makes it bubbly are normally separated underground then carried up separate pipes to the bottling facility, Zimmer said.

A filter on the gas pipe that cleans out Benzene and other impurities had not been changed in "several months," Zimmer said, malfunctioning and allowing naturally-occurring Benzene to seep through.

"We don't know exactly how long the filter had been there, that's the problem," said Zimmer. "It was complete negligence."

Zimmer ruled out industrial espionage and said disciplinary action had been taken against the workers involved.

Traces of Benzene have been found in samples of the water in the United States, Canada, the Netherlands and Denmark in recent days, but Zimmer said the chemical could turn up elsewhere.

Toxicologists from the university of Clermont-Ferrand said that the amount of benzene found in samples it tested would pose a cancer threat only if consumers drank a little per day for life.

The samples exceeded US standards of 5 parts per billion and European standards of 10 parts per billion, Zimmer said.

French distributors will decide on their own whether to pull their Perrier off the shelves and ask the company for fresh shipments, Leven said.

"The water still tastes good," he said after the conference.

Earlier Wednesday, the water's Dutch importer, Hero Nederland BV, recalled more than a million bottles in the Netherlands.

"Small traces of the stuff, to the extent of about 10 parts per billion, have been found in several samples," tested there in recent days, Managing Director Herman Schieffers said.

In Denmark, traces of benzene were found Tuesday in several Perrier bottles, prompting the importer, Peter Heering, and the distributor, Albani Breweries, to withdraw up to 300,000 bottles.

Heering said.

About 72 million bottles of Perrier were withdrawn from the US market last week after benzene was detected in tests by the US Food and Drug Administration.

Bahrain digs for clues to Dilmun

BAHRAIN, Feb 16, (Reuter). Archaeologists in Bahrain are digging through 4,000 years of history to learn more about the people who dominated the ancient trade routes of the Middle East.

Chances are good that they will find the site of the world's largest prehistoric graveyard — was once the centre of the bustling Dilmun empire.

Ancient Dilmun's trade network stretched from the Indus Valley in Pakistan to Mesopotamia at the head of the Gulf and Anatolia in what is now Turkey.

Archaeologists say it is becoming clear that 100,000 grave mounds built in Bahrain between 2,000 and 1,700 BC were not used for burial by the Mesopotamians, who considered the island a holy land.

More than a third of the graves have been destroyed by development, but not before many were examined by archaeologists from Jordan, Denmark, France and Bahrain itself.

Now a British team is excavating a 4,000-year-old town near an oasis in the northern part of the island to try to discover how the ancient Dilmun people lived.

"Thanks to all the excavations which have been done so far we know a great deal about how the people lived but we know remarkably little about how they lived," said Harriet Crawford, one of the expedition's directors.

"What we do know is that they were very skilful merchants and the island was an extremely important international market place at around 2,000 BC."

Research

Crawford, who has done extensive research in Iraq, said the Mesopotamians once were dependent on goods shipped from Dilmun.

Clay tablets found in Iraq showed Dilmun supplied them with wood, ivory and precious stones from the Indus Valley, copper from Oman and statite stone from Iran and the Arabian Peninsula.

Mesopotamian merchants provided wool and grain — a valuable commodity for Dilmun, which imported much of its food.

In turn Dilmun, with numerous freshwater springs, was famous for its dates and "fish-eyes" — an old term for pearls.

An ancient Middle Eastern epic says the warrior Gilgamesh came to Dilmun on a quest for immortality to find Ziusudra, survivor of a pre-biblical flood.

Ziusudra told Gilgamesh to find the flower of immortality by tying a stone to his feet and jumping into the sea — a technique Gulf pearl divers used until recently.

Crawford said Dilmun — which boomed between 2,200 BC and 1,800 BC — had links with Magan, an earlier culture in what is now Oman in the southern Arabian peninsula, and Failaka in modern Kuwait at the opposite end of the Gulf.

Circular statite seals with which Dilmun merchants stamped their goods have also turned up near Saudi Arabia's empty quarter and at oases in the United Arab Emirates.

Settlements discovered on the eastern Saudi coast are believed to have been part of Dilmun itself.

Evidence

"Not much is known about the ancient Gulf civilisations, but these days wherever we look in the area we are finding evidence of settlements," Crawford said.

Unlike other Dilmun sites in Bahrain, the town at Saar Oasis is readily accessible because it is not buried beneath layers of later Assyrian, Roman and Greek civilisations.

Flanked by a cemetery, an ancient temple, and the Oasis itself, the town comprises about one hundred houses — each with its own L-shaped courtyard, fireplace and pot storage area.

The archaeologists believe these were used to hold water, cereal, dates, and an ancient beer brewed from grain or dates.

One of two Dilmun seals discovered at Saar shows two people sitting on stools drinking through straws from a pot.

New law on Aids carriers, says Awadi

Prevent prejudice: Mann

KUWAIT, Feb 16, (Kuna). Planning and acting Public Health Minister Dr Abdul Rahman Al Awadi asserted that the number of Aids patients in Kuwait has never exceeded 55 cases and said a new law on dealing with the killer disease carriers in the country will be enacted shortly.

Responding to questions at a massive rally organised at the end of the three-day Kuwait Third International Conference on the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, Aids, Dr Awadi disclosed that 47 of detected patients came from outside Kuwait and were sent back to their countries.

He told the rally, which was attended by a crowd of 1,700, including students and cadets, that Aids patients have always been put under close watch and dealt with in absolute secrecy.

"A new law will be introduced within few weeks to deal with carriers of Aids virus in Kuwait," Dr Awadi said. He added the law will stipulate the rights of both the patient and society and the punishment to be imposed on those who deliberately cause the transference of the virus to healthy people.

The planning and public health minister reiterated that the fatal disease is a global problem and will continue to pose a serious threat to humanity, noting that Aids will also continue to spread as long people abandoned their spiritual values.

He stressed that the public Health Ministry will continue to strictly abide by current protective measures including the Aids blood tests for all new workforce.

The director of Kuwait's contagious diseases hospital Dr Abdulaziz Al Anzi, speaking in the rally, said the Public Health Ministry has imported a medicine that could prolong life-time of Aids patient, but would not lead to total elimination of the fatal epidemic.

He said the ministry was about to complete construction of a



Jonathan Mann

special ward for Aids patients and another for intensive care to treat carriers of the virus who were in serious condition.

Diana Abou Haider adds: In addition to the epidemics of Aids and infection with its virus, the world today is facing yet another one, that of social, cultural and political reaction to the first two epidemics, said Dr Jonathan Mann, director of the World Health Organisation's Global Programme on Aids.

The international expert who participated in the Kuwait Third International Conference last week, added that this epidemic may be as important to our future as the virus itself because it could threaten to overshadow and overwhelm the first two epidemics by spreading myths and unfounded fears about the disease and by assailing the rights and dignity of infected people.

"Aids is not just a medical question but a problem for society as a whole. The reaction of a society to the disease could be good, harmful or helpful," said Mann.

He explained that community-based educational and care programmes can be very constructive in the fight against Aids, but the attitudes of prejudice and denial are certainly a huge threat.

"A society that is prejudiced against people who are infected with the virus or those who might have indulged in behaviour that could lead to infection is doing great harm to itself. So are countries that accused others of spreading the disease in them. It is always easier to blame others and the deeply ingrained ideas that foreigners are bad and we are good should be changed," Mann stated.

He added that a society that denies the problem is a society that is increasing its own danger. "Look at what is happening in this region (the Eastern Mediterranean). There are now over 400 reported cases and we know that the number is greater than that because there is always a problem in reporting the real numbers. The number of infected people is even greater because we know that those who are infected now were infected five to 10 years ago."

Balance

"It is a very difficult balance we have to achieve between informing people and scaring them," said the international expert. "The only thing we can do is constantly repeat the information as often as possible and in many different ways. There are still people who believe that you can catch Aids by shaking hands."

Mann stressed the need for national policies and programmes against Aids to be based on respect for the right and dignity of infected people because it has been proven that whenever prejudice or discrimination of any kind exist, those who are prejudiced against become much more vulnerable to the disease.

"Principles of a successful fight against Aids are: openness, education, support and non-discrimination," he said adding that some discriminatory national policies should be reviewed especially because the fight against Aids will be more difficult in the '90s than it was in the '80s.



Pak minister visits PPC

The Pakistani Justice and Law Minister Mr Ifkhar Huseain Gilani visited the Pakistan People's Club at Mithra.

PPC president Haji Mohammad Afzal Noor and club members arranged a reception for Gilani.

The reception was also attended by Pakistani Ambassador Zahid Saeed. A large number of party members welcomed the minister and other officials at the club office.

A delegation of Kashmiri people also met the minister.

Saudis behead four for heroin smuggling

RIYADH, Feb 16, (AP). Three Pakistanis and a Somali were beheaded today after Islamic courts convicted them on charges of smuggling heroin, the Interior Ministry announced.

In separate announcements, the ministry identified the Pakistanis as Gomaa Shahdin Abdul Rahman, Bir Mohammed Thureib Khan and Malak Aman Sayed Omar Sayed Gollam, and the Somali as Mahmood Bin Haji Ali.

The four were caught smuggling heroin into the kingdom, with the first stuffing it in the soles of his shoes, and the Somali in a handbag.

The four confessed to smuggling the narcotics into the kingdom, the announcement said.

Two Pakistanis were beheaded in the capital Riyadh and a third in the Red Sea port city of Jeddah. The Somali was executed in the Muslim holy city of Makkah.

Each Interior Ministry statement affirmed the kingdom's determination to combat drugs "for the grave harm they bring to the individual and to society."

Beheadings take place in a public square after the Friday Muslim congregational prayers.

Saudi Arabia is ruled by Islamic law or sharia which prescribes beheading for murder, stoning for adultery and handcutting for theft.

King Fahd has spearheaded a vigil campaign against drugs which began spreading in societies of the oil-rich countries on the Arabian peninsula with the oil boom of the 1970s.

In 1987, Muslim theologians ruled that the death penalty can be applied to drug smugglers because they "spread corruption on the face of the earth."

Some two dozen men, mainly Pakistanis, have been beheaded after the sharia courts convicted them for drug smuggling.

Pakistanis, Yemenis, and many other nationalities make up a 3 million-strong expatriate labour force in the kingdom to help with the oil-fuelled economic and social development.

GCC-EC co-op

DOHA, Feb 16, (Kuna). Gulf Co-operation Council Secretary General Abdullah Yaqoub Bishara said Thursday night that the scheduled meeting between the six GCC states and the European Economic Community in Grenada next Monday will discuss horizons of co-operation between the two groups.

Speaking to Qatari News Agency, Bishara said that the gathering groups 500 participants, 110 of them from the GCC states.

New HQ for Pama

THE Deputy Director General of the Public Authority for Minors Affairs Abdul Mohsen Al Mijhem was quoted as saying that the authority will receive visitors at its new premises situated at Al Sharq areas as of Feb 26 and all preparations have been made to complete the streamlining of the authority's procedures.

He explained that the new headquarters consisted of 12 floors with a large hall of 1,500 square metres, with a present staff of 35 employees.

Mijhem said that the authority is primarily concerned in investing its funds in the best interest of minors and disclosed that the authority is looking after the interests of about 15,511 minors.

The authority had disbursed an amount of about KD432,586 up to the end of 1989 as aid to candidates who have been registered. This is in addition to an amount of KD2.4 million which is due from the Credit and Savings Bank.

ARAB TIMES

Thought for today

A MAN is not old until regrets take the place of dreams
— John Barrymore US actor (1882-1942).

Najibullah tightens grip

Peace elusive as ever before

KABUL, (Reuters): A year after Soviet troops pulled out of Afghanistan, peace for the battered country of 18 million people remains as elusive as ever.

Defying the predictions of Western analysts, President Najibullah has strengthened his grip on power since the last of the Soviet soldiers supporting him left the country on Feb 15 last year.

But the war against US-backed Muslim rebels rages on, leaving the economy in tatters and frustrating any effort to repair the devastation caused by 11 years of fighting.

"I am not optimistic the war will end soon even if the superpowers agree to stop supplying arms to the belligerents," said one foreign diplomat in Kabul.

Diplomats say neither side is strong enough to win on the battlefield. The government has remained on the defensive since the Soviet pullout, battling to protect key towns from rebels attacks. But the rebels, attempting to switch from commandos tactics to conventional warfare, have suffered major setbacks.

Beaten

"Under the present correlation of forces, the government cannot be beaten militarily," another diplomat said.

Kabul has repeatedly proposed a ceasefire, United Nations-supervised elections and a demilitarisation of Afghanistan as the only way to end the conflict.

But the rebels have publicly refused to negotiate with a government that they hold responsible for the deaths of more than one million people and the exile of five million others.

Najibullah renewed his offer of a truce on Wednesday in a televised address to mark the first anniversary of the Soviet pullout.

The rebels fired five rockets at Kabul on Thursday in an apparent rejection of the proposal.

Najibullah's offer coincided with a call by Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze for the demilitarisation of Afghanistan and a four power peace conference.

Shevardnadze also proposed a halt to all arms supplies to Afghanistan and a ceasefire followed by the removal of all arms stocks from the country.

An Afghan journalist, who asked not to be identified, said the Soviet Union's intervention in Afghanistan had sown seeds of discord that were plaguing the country. "It will be a difficult task to reconcile" the two sides, the journalist said.

The war is fuelled by extensive military aid to the government from the Soviet Union, which entered Afghanistan in 1979 to prop up the faltering Marxist government, and to the rebels from the United States.

Relations

Despite improving relations between Moscow and Washington, Afghan government spokesman Mohammad Najib said recently that the superpowers remained far from agreement on the conflict.

There is diplomatic consensus here that a deal between Moscow and Washington to halt arms supplies would benefit Kabul in the short run or, as one diplomat put it, "until their missiles and air power run dry."

But even if arms supplies cease, both sides are believed to have enough weapons stockpiled to keep the war going at the same level for at least two years.

Few regret the departure of the Soviet forces. Najib said there were no plans to commemorate the pullout because sending troops into Afghanistan was a mistake and "you don't celebrate mistakes."

The government is trying to win support by distancing itself from its communist past. Once a staunch proponent of Marxism-Leninism, the ruling People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan now claims to be Islamic, nationalist and pro-democracy.

Privately, government officials also agree that the coup which brought the communists to power in 1978 was a mistake. "The timing was wrong because the people were not yet ready for socialism," a senior official said.

"Before the revolution everything was cheap and in abundance," said one government employee. "Now we have no security, no peace, no food, no nothing."

Food

In the big cities at least, there appears to be more food than last year because the winter has been relatively mild. And there have been fewer rebel interruptions of a key highway that is Kabul's main lifeline to the Soviet Union.

But in the countryside, United Nations officials report people are starving because of food shortages and a rapid decline in the purchasing power of the afghani.

The currency has plummeted to 500 to the US dollar in the bazaars from 220 one year ago. The official rate is 55 afghanis to the dollar.

The average local salary is about 3,000 afghanis a month, good for 12 kg (26.5 pounds) of rice or four kg (8.8 pounds) of mutton in the free market.

Although state workers get coupons entitling them to 50 kg (110 pounds) of rice and four kg of cooking oil every month, not all of them get their full quotas because of shortages.

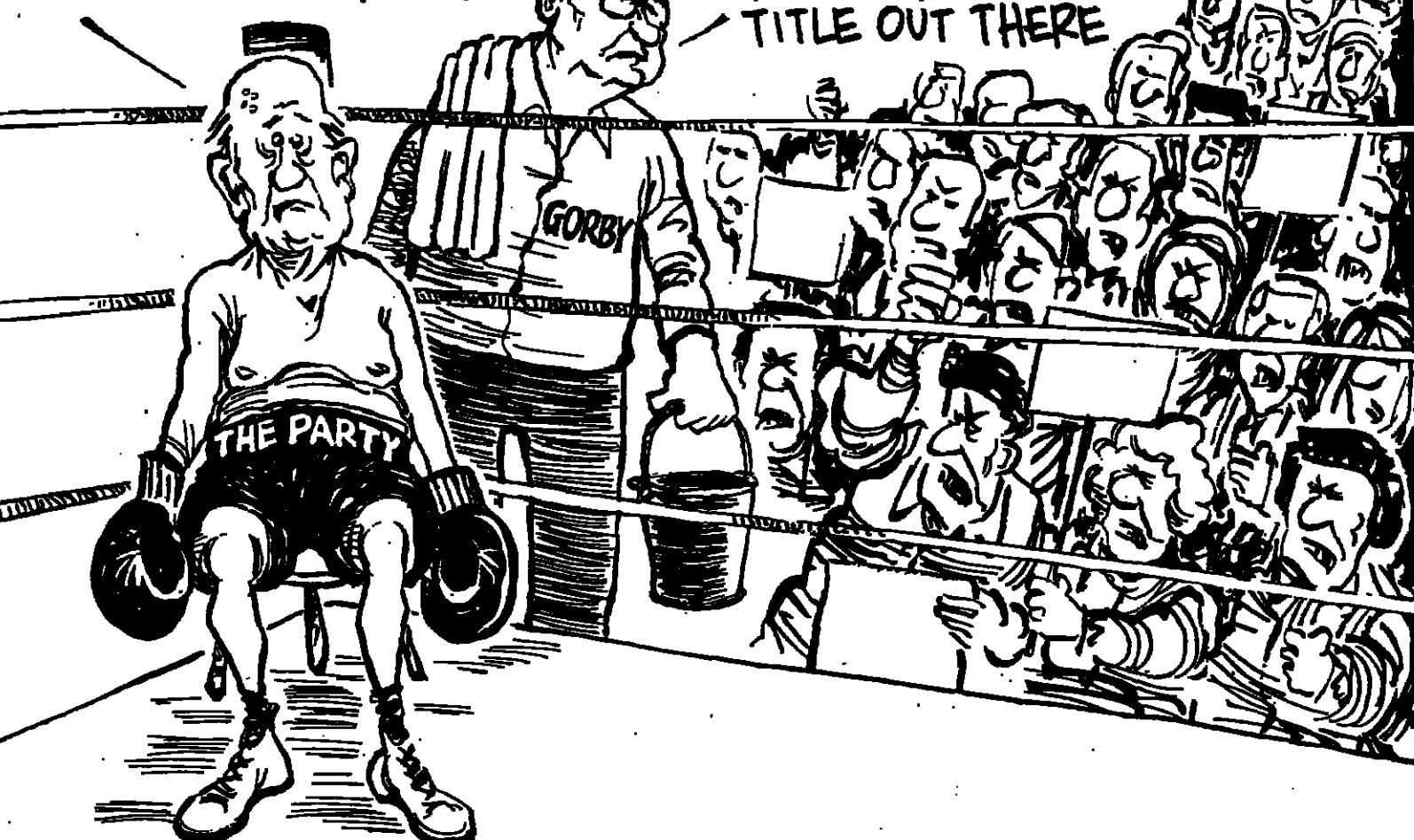
They are also entitled to four kg of sugar, four bars of soap and 500 gms (1.1 pounds) of tea at subsidised prices.

In Kabul's main carpet and jewellery area, shopkeepers said business was awful. Some traders said the only good that could be said of the Soviet troops was that they had inspired Western diplomats, "our main buyers," to stay.

When the Soviet Army withdrew, the diplomats, concerned about their safety, also packed their bags and left.

I HAVE TO DEFEND MY TITLE IN HERE?!

THE ALTERNATIVE IS TO DEFEND YOUR TITLE OUT THERE



ELECTIONS

WASSERMAN
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Strong spirit

SIR: Three hundred years back when Richard Lovelace was put into English prison cell, he wrote the following verse on the prison wall: "Stone walls do not a prison make, Nor iron bars a cage. The sparrow's mind and innocent calls that a hermit make. If I have freedom in my love And in my soul I am free, Angels alone that are above enjoy such liberty."

Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for life for his patriotic activities but finally released after 27 years of imprisonment. During the first decade of his imprisonment, he was made to break the rocks and turn into fine gravel — what a hard labour and harsh punishment! God forbids such punishments even to worst enemies. He went to the prison as an able-bodied man full of youth and vigour but came out of it physically shaken. If at all he survived to see his freedom, it was only because of his strong spirit that kept him alert. Former President Botha wanted to shatter him and to turn him docile but instead his long years in prison made Mandela more mature in his political philosophy resulting in having more freedom of thoughts. This freedom finally captivated the might of his oppressors to such an extent that his prison cell turned into a conference hall for discussing not only his freedom but also to nullify the crime against humanity called — apartheid.

Punishments

There are leaders in the world who think that human movements can be crushed by making the body undergo harsh punishments but it is not always the case. In order to shut his mouth for his campaign against Czarist regime, Bakunin, the Russian, was made to suffer worst imprisonment in the then Russia and because of such cruelty in his prison cell, he lost his teeth turning him unfit to practice his ferocious oratory.

However, his spirit was left untouched that forced him to utter his movement against Czarist regime by way of writings.

History is full of examples where body suffered but spirit remained intact. After all, it is said by John Milton in his Paradise Lost that "Mind is in his own place and it can make a hell into a heaven and heaven into a hell."

The white-skinned people that coloured people are usually inferior to them. But let the inflated ego of whites be aware that early civilisation was started in Africa and coloured Asia when Europeans were still living in caves as uncivilised people. Secondly, anthropologists have proved that given equal opportunities, no man is inferior to the other. For example, Martin Luther King Jr. Pele, Carl Lewis, Muhammad Ali, Bishop Tutu, Mahatma Gandhi and many others proved the fact by destroying the fabric of white superiority.

Those who supported Mandela's imprisonment and also all those who kept silent over his imprisonment and that of his like will remain guilty not only in the eyes of humanity but also in the eyes of God.

A. Veronica Fernandes, Safat.

Help S. Africa

SIR: I am an exiled South African studying in London. My name is Shona, and I implore you to consider this letter well, for it could be important to many people.

Kashmir issue

SIR: I am writing this in reply to some comments made by one Dr Haider Mahdi, regarding the situation in Kashmir state of India. Some comments of his are contrary to truth and are questionable.

"Kashmir to Kanyakurnam" India is one. This feeling is in the heart of every Indian, regardless of religion or creed.

Indians have a unity in diversity. India is not a religious country. It is a secular state in the true sense. Every religion has the same right and freedom there.

Moreover minorities have special constitutional safeguards, and reservations. In Kashmir there is no dominance like Hindu dominance at the writer has alleged in his letter. There is Kashmiri, and Indian dominance only. Moreover Kashmir is given special constitutional status, safeguards etc. considering its Muslim dominance, majority, and its sensitive border position. Indian Muslims, and minority religious groups are enjoying the maximum religious freedom in India. India considers all religions equal. There is no religious discrimination.

Kashmir, as well as other states, groups, and individuals have so many genuine grievances. To achieve the aim, looting, kidnapping of Muslim ladies and killing is not the way. India is a great, true, secular democratic country. By democratic process only a cause is fulfilled. (Name and address supplied)

I promise to reply to every letter received to share the results. I will also forward the letters to our leader, Nelson Mandela, and the ANC, as well as to F.W. de Klerk, and anyone else interested.

Shoba Abantu, London, UK.

Mocking words

SIR: The frequent repetition of two groups of news items in the Arab Times need close review and your attention.

First are the items relating to Islamic laws which are clearly aimed at ridiculing Islam. They are being quoted by Arab Times from other world agencies. Such 'Islamic news' are extracted out of their complete context and projected with manipulated words to give them mockable views by the anti-Islamic agencies. This is not new or surprising from them. What is alarming is that such news are selected to be reproduced in these Islamic countries in the same mocking words.

Secondly items like 'sex' news which are finding front page space and hold their morality barriers get more and more flexible by such news.

We are sure that inclusion of such news must be finding Arab Times more enjoyable and agreeable to many of its readers. However, there are many others who consider it a matter of concern. We feel concerned to observe that gradually and definitely the forces set out to distort Islam and corrupt innocent minds are using their ways into these Islamic countries in the cloak of 'progress'.

The suffering caused by destruction of morality by random theories are evident the world over. Let us preserve, value, and glorify the treasure of Islam in its true meaning and spirit.

Needless to mention that news media plays very important role in moulding the minds of its readers. It must be safeguarded with greater responsibility.

M.A. Jahangir, Hawaii.

No comparison

SIR: Unfortunately, I happened to read the letter written by one Mohd. Akram, Safat, dated Feb 9, regarding the Kashmir issue. I do not only strongly object to his views but also would like to mention that he is a fanatic who does not know what is really taking place around him. I'm sure he has never tried to go deep into the actual problems of Palestinians, instead he vainly tried to accuse a press.

I fail to understand why being one of the reputed press in Kuwait, Arab Times has spared that much space for a matter which is childish.

I would like to remind this gentleman that the Palestine problems can't be compared with the Kashmir. It has got a gulf of difference in all levels.

A. Muddakkal, K.C.C. Salmiya.

Great news

SIR: The release of Nelson Mandela is a great news of the year 1990. Like India, great leader Mahatma Gandhi, Mandela dedicated his life for the nation and I wish that his ambitions are fulfilled in his life time.

H.S. Rao, Safat.

ALL Letters to the Editor must contain the writer's name and address. Publication is at the discretion of the Editor and letters are subject to the editing process for space or other reasons.

The world wants to see this fight again. Nobody is interested in anything else. Buster Douglas did a great job. He defeated a great champion. What is good for boxing is that there should be a rematch between him and the great former champion. — WBC boss Jose Sulaiman on a rematch between Tyson and Douglas.

"I have failed God and made many mistakes in my lifetime, but I am not guilty of any of the charges the government has made against me. FTL was not bankrupt while Tammy and I were there. "Those who conspired to defraud us and the FTL partners put the ministry into bankruptcy, then lobbied the government to launch a grand jury investigation and instigated a class action suit. They had to destroy me to cover and justify their crime. — Jimmy Baker in a letter from prison.

"HE should leave King and get back to me. Mike had no fire in his eyes, he didn't come to fight. You have to place the blame somewhere and they're the trainers [Jay Bright and Aaron Squawell], so they're the guys you blame. — Tyson's ex-trainer, Kevin Rooney.

"The president of the Supreme Soviet was unanimously supported institutionalizing democratic presidential power in the Soviet Union. An extraordinary Congress of People's Deputies will convene soon to consider this and other matters relating to deepening political reform." — a statement, carried by Tass.

"I'm excited about the fact that I will be looked upon as the unified, undisputed heavyweight champion. That's great. And I will get my hardware — my two other belts. I left Tokyo short (two belts). The main thing is the heavyweight champion of the world. It was a life-long dream come true and I thank God for that." — New heavies king Buster Douglas.

Reverse

Among the candidates it defeated were the republic's president and premier.

Interfax also quoted a representative of the Latvian Communist Party Central Committee, V. Solodov, as saying that the people's front in that Baltic republic enjoys "decisive influence," and that communists are preparing to go into opposition in local councils.

Solodov was quoted as saying Latvian communists think they could reverse their poor standing by following the Lithuanians and splitting from Moscow.

Groups

Journalism professor Marjū Lasmis, one of those in the forefront of the Estonian People's Front, has helped found a new social democratic party. Small groups of social democrats, Christian democrats, liberals and other groups have formed in other Baltic republics as well.

Although they do not stand a chance of ousting the communists, such small parties will win some seats in local and republic elections this spring. The communists may be forced into governing coalitions, possibly with a people's

front umbrella uniting reformers among the communists and the new parties.

The Radio Moscow news service Interfax quoted Boris Orlov, an historian and expert on the social democratic movement, as saying social democrats could win 20 per cent to 30 per cent of the vote in the Baltics.

Lithuania's Communist Party took the electoral threat seriously enough to break away from the national party in December, believing it could not compete in elections as long as it was tied to Moscow's policies.

The Lithuanian party, led by Algirdas Brazauskas, shares the goals of Sajudis, that republic's people's front — including eventual independence from Moscow. Lithuanian communists learned a lesson from national elections last March, when Sajudis first showed his organisational muscle by gaining election for nearly all of the more than 30 candidates it endorsed.

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LDP to keep power in poll

TOKYO, (Reuters): Japan's long-entrenched ruling party, profiting from opposition disarray and voters' desire for stability in a fast-changing world, looks set to hold power in Sunday's general election.

Despite early campaign predictions of a tight struggle, latest polls agree that the Liberal Democratic Party should retain its majority in the lower house of Parliament.

But with voter surveys also showing a high proportion still "undecided" — one put the figure at over 40 per cent — an upset win for the non-communist opposition cannot be totally ruled out.

Clear

Analysts agree Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu, who needs a clear victory to fight off rivals within his own party, has successfully shifted the campaign focus away from the LDP's scandals to whether his opponents are competent to govern.

"I'm voting LDP," said Takehiko Shindo, 50, a Tokyo bank branch sub-manager. "We're talking about the government now, talking about keeping Japan going. It's not a joke anymore."

Big business, frightened that Japan's economic success would be jeopardised by a socialist victory, coughed up a reputed 27 billion yen (\$185 million) to finance the LDP campaign. The opposition failed to stir public indignation over the issue.

The Japan Socialist Party, the main opposition group, talked confidently of forming a coalition government but its potential partners dragged their feet.

Voters have seen the Japan socialists disagree with the middle-of-the-road Komeito (clean government party) and the democratic socialists on key issues such as Japan-US relations and defence.

This has allowed Kaifu to present LDP politicians, at a time of political turmoil in Eastern Europe and closer to home in China, as the experienced, competent administrators Japan will need in the perilous 1990s.

Analysts said that would probably mean Japan's trading partners just fine.

One Asian diplomat in Tokyo said his government would prefer a strong LDP government to a socialist-led coalition. "Better the devil you know than the one you don't," he added.

Predict

Latest polls unanimously predict the LDP will reach the magic number of 257 seats in the 512-strong lower house and may even exceed 270, enabling the party to control all committees.

The surveys show the Japan socialists apparently on course to raise their own representation to between 120 and 140.

That is a big improvement on the 85 they won in 1986, but still less than what they dreamt of last summer when their party, led by flamboyant chairwoman Takako Doi, spearheaded an opposition drive to take control of the upper house for the first time.

Since then, the mood in the country has changed. Analysts say people now are more cynical than angry at the LDP's clumsily introduced sales tax, the involvement of top party figures in the Recruit "shares-for-favours" affair, and a prime minister's affair with a geisha.

Farmers say they are generally less inclined than last year to vote against the LDP and are resigned to further liberalisation of agricultural imports.

Doi has also found it difficult to reprise her "Madonna strategy" of last summer, when her triumph thrust women to the forefront of Japanese politics for the first time.

Female indignation at corruption and plundering in the top ranks of the LDP, at the hated sales tax and, generally, at the complacency and insensitivity of a long-dominant, male-controlled political machine seems to have cooled.

Some husbands who caught their wives' enthusiasm and voted against LDP candidates in July now say the crucial lower house contest is no time to vote emotionally.

Stoppag

Kaifu, at 59 a stopgap choice for prime minister after a string of party leaders were tainted by scandal, entered the campaign written off as a lame duck.

But he leads the LDP to a big win on Sunday, he will still need to guard against party barons, "cleaned" by a new mandate from the people, trying to take back the reins. Former foreign minister Shintaro Abe, for one, has made no secret of his desire to end his career in the top job.

Kaifu would also face a lot of other problems, both at home and abroad.

Even with a clear LDP majority in the more powerful lower house, the party would have to live with a hostile upper chamber empowered to block its legislation.

Quote me

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TODAY IN HISTORY

- 1568 — Turkey's Sultan Selim II makes peace with Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian II
- 1670 — France signs defensive alliance with Bavaria.
- 1720 — Peace treaty between Quadruple Alliance and Spain signed.
- 1813 — Prussia's Frederick William III declares war on France.
- 1852 — Repressive measures are adopted in France, including press censorship.
- 1897 — Britain rejects Austro-Russian proposal for blockade of Piraeus in Greece.
- 1916 — British and French forces complete capture of Germany's African colony of Cameroon during World War I.
- 1934 — Belgium's King Albert I is killed while mountain-climbing.
- 1936 — Anglo-Irish pact ends tariff war
- 1944 — US forces attack Japanese at Eniwetok atoll in Pacific in World War II.
- 1965 — US spacecraft Ranger 8 is launched from Cape Kennedy, Florida, and make crash-landing on moon three days later after sending back more 7,000 pictures.
- 1987 — Shiite militiamen and leftist alliance of Druze and communist gunmen clash in Lebanon's West Beirut for control of capital's Muslim sector.

Reforms to benefit movements

MOSCOW, (AP): The Soviet Union's move toward political pluralism is likely to give a new boost to a variety of broad-based movements known as "People's Fronts." These popular political organisations could eventually become formal opposition parties.

Separate people's fronts exist in most of the Soviet republics and in many of the major cities of Russia. Among the political organisations pressing the Communist Party for reform, these groups have gained some experience, a wide following and electoral successes.

In the light of the Communist Party decision last Wednesday (Feb 7) to give up its constitutional claim to absolute political power, the people's front movement appears to be a first step from decades of Communist Party dictatorship to a system for formal political competition.

Since it first arose in the Baltic republics of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia almost two years ago in their first sign of serious organised opposition to communist rule, the movement has taken in a largely ill-defined mass of people, their local grievances and hopes for a better future.

Distinction

Some places, as in Estonia and Lithuania, there is little distinction between the leadership of the people's front and the reform-minded leaders of the Communist Party. Elsewhere, as in the Caucasus republics and in Moldavia, the people's front stands in opposition to the local Communist Party leadership.

Regardless, the fronts painstakingly point out that they are not political parties. Few, if any, of them have lists of

members or know how many members they have. None says it is actively seeking political power. The people's front organisations of various regions cooperate, but the emphasis remains on local issues, and there has been little effort to bring the entire movement together.

Nevertheless, leaders of the people's front movements say that they will at some point outline their purpose of energising an apathetic population. The next step is for various factions within the organisations to find their own platform and spinoff into political parties, they said.

"In this political structure, where there is no democracy, our goal is to re-establish a democratic, parliamentary system," said Tokif Gosymov, one of 14 directors of the Azerbaijan People's Front. "Then it can go out of the picture and leave it to the development of political parties."

In the Baltic republics, where the process has gone further, the people's front movements already are forming the basis of new parties opposing the communists.

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قنا من الدول

Arabs fail to pay uprising cash

ABU DHABI, Feb 16, (Reuters): The PLO's top financial official appealed to Arab states yesterday for more money to support a Palestinian uprising in the Israeli-occupied territories, saying most were not honouring promises of cash made two years ago.

"We call on Arab countries to comply with the (1988) Algiers decision," to fund the uprising, Jawad Al Ghusein, chairman of the Palestine National Fund (PNF) told Reuters. "This is the least they can do."

Ghusein said Arab states had paid well under 30 per cent of the sums they had pledged at an Arab summit in Algiers.

The summit endorsed an urgent payment of \$128 million and then \$43 million every month to support the Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

More than 800 Arabs and 44 Jews have died in the revolt, now 26 months old. "We have not received one dollar of the \$128 million," said Ghusein, an executive committee member of the Palestine

Liberation Organisation (PLO).

"As for the 43 million a month, we got less than 30 per cent of that in 1989," he said at his office in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

He said only Saudi Arabia (\$6 million a month), Iraq (4.2 million), the UAE (3 million) and Kuwait (2 million) were currently paying the PNF, the PLO's financial arm.

Libya had given \$4 to \$5 million a month for eight months in 1988 but nothing in 1989, he said.

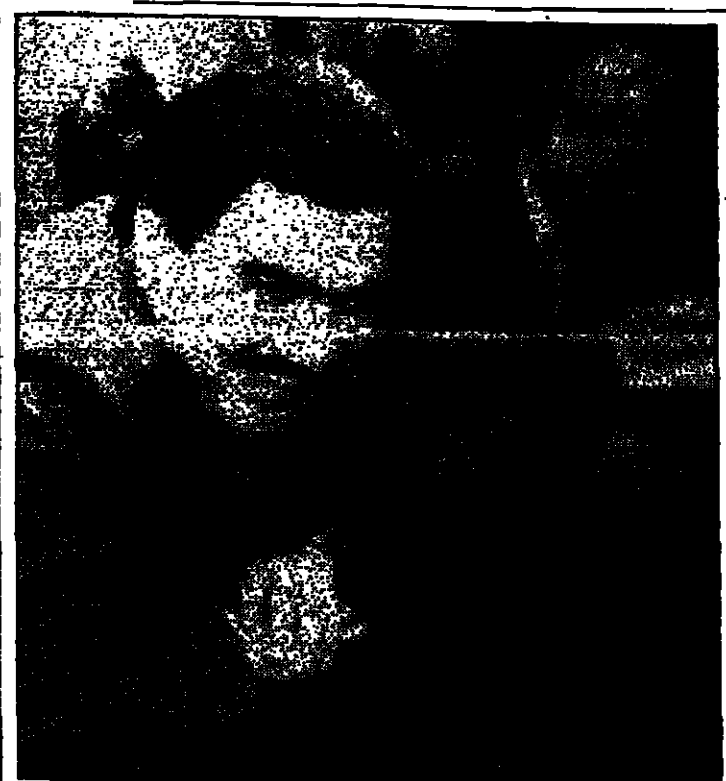
Last month however Tripoli began paying \$6 million a month directly to Palestinian hospitals and charities in the occupied territories, he added.

\$43 million a month was the minimum required to cover the basic needs of the 1.5 million Palestinians in the territories, which have been occupied by Israel since 1967, he said.

UAE President Sheikh Zaid Bin Sultan Al Nahayan had personally made a payment of \$10 million to the PNF, Ghusein said.

Mujahedeen reject Soviet plan

Rockets hit Kabul on first pullout anniversary



Afghan President Najibullah (left) smiles on the first anniversary of the Soviet military withdrawal from Afghanistan. Najibullah reiterated that he would not step down from power before proposed elections in a post-war Afghanistan. (Reuters wirephoto)

KABUL, Feb 16, (Agencies): US-backed Afghan rebels, rejecting "all imported proposals" for peace, fired five rockets at Kabul and killed at least one person yesterday, the first anniversary of the completion of the Soviet withdrawal.

Fears among citizens, officials and diplomats of a massive rockets barrage on the occasion of the Soviet-backed government, however, did not materialise.

Mohammad Naqib Samer, a Foreign Ministry spokesman, said five rockets hit different spots of the city of 2 million.

One person was killed and at least two wounded by a rocket hitting the Kote Sanghi district and another person was wounded when a rocket hit a northern suburb, Samer said. Three other rockets caused no damage.

Samer said three of the missiles fired by rebels from nearby snow-covered mountains were "cluster rockets" that burst about 150 feet (45m) above the ground. Each releases 96 bomblets set to explode on impact or lie dormant until disturbed, according to foreign diplomats.

The rockets came one year from Feb 15, 1989, when Moscow ended a nine-year occupation of the country it invaded to back the communist government against Muslim insurgents.

There were no official ceremonies marking "one year of the independent defence of the homeland," although Najibullah marked the occasion Wednesday evening with a television and radio address offering comments on his rejected peace plan.

Thursday, Afghan rebels in Islamabad, Pakistan, again shrugged off Najibullah's proposal of a ceasefire and the convening of a grand council of all factions of Afghan society that would hold elections under UN auspices.

"Najibullah should not give himself the authority to propose anything that concerns the future of Afghanistan," said Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, prime minister of the government-in-exile set up by rebels in Pakistan last year.

"He might have Afghan citizenship, but he has been forced into the country with tanks," Sayyaf told a news conference.

The United States recently shifted its position on an Afghan settlement, dropping its insistence that Najibullah step down prior to peace talks.

And Thursday in Washington, the State Department said it has suspended a \$30 million humanitarian food aid programme to Afghan rebel forces because US officials could not adequately monitor the deliveries.

Soviet officials this week reiterated their proposal for an end to foreign military aid to all factions in an international peace conference to include US, Soviet, Pakistan, Iranian and Afghan representatives.

But Sayyaf vowed the resistance would score a military victory and warned against foreign bids for a political settlement to the 11-year-old war.

"Our fate will be decided by our hands and not by foreigners," he said.

The Soviet Union proposed on Wednesday the holding of an international conference attended by the United Nations and four other countries in addition to Afghanistan to look for a solution for the Afghan crisis.

"We propose a conference of these four countries with the participation of the United Nations secretary-general or his representatives," Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze said in an article published in the newspaper Izvestia.

Shevardnadze also suggested halting all arms supplies to the warring sides and suspending all military operations in a step toward demilitarisation of the country.

Iran-based Afghan rebels rebuffed the proposal to Shevardnadze's proposal was made in a Tehran news conference.

The Afghan foreign minister cautiously welcomed the new plan, but questioned whether the Afghan government would play a big enough part.

"All in all it is very interesting," Abdul Wakil said of the 10-point Soviet plan.

President Najib, Wednesday again appealed to Afghan opposition forces at home and abroad to enter into peace negotiations.

He offered the US-backed mujahedeen a six-month ceasefire and said his troops would stop firing long-range Soviet missiles if the rebels stopped firing rockets at Kabul and other cities.

Sharon attacks Shamir bitterly

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM, Feb 16, (Agencies): Hardline Israeli politician Ariel Sharon has launched his bitterest attack yet on Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, calling him cruel and dangerous and saying he would one day take Shamir's place.

In an interview with the Yedioth Aharan, daily published today, the 61-year-old architect of Israel's 1982 Lebanon invasion also admitted his misjudgment led to the slaughter of Palestinians by Christians in Lebanon's Sabra and Shatila refugee camps.

"Shamir is a dangerous man. I will never forgive Shamir for putting this nation to sleep," Sharon said in the interview published four days after he announced his resignation as trade minister.

"Shamir is definitely a cruel man," said the lanky Sharon, who has vowed to launch a one-man campaign against a government proposal for Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

Claiming victory over Shamir at a chaotic meeting last Monday of their rightist Likud Party, Sharon told the newspaper: "I still believe I will be prime minister."

Sharon admitted his misjudgment in the Lebanon war while defending his criticism of Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin's failure to quash a 26-month-old Palestinian uprising in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Sharon said the United States was interfering in Israeli affairs by welcoming his cabinet resignation over Middle East peace moves.

"I am a friend of the United States," he told Israeli television when asked whether the White House was not overjoyed by his resignation.

Sharon promised to launch an alternative peace campaign on Sunday after quitting the government over his plan for talks with Palestinians.

The retired general told Israeli television he would formally resign at a cabinet meeting on Sunday and then hold a news conference.

An Israeli army expert on Islamic fundamentalism says progress in the Middle East peace process could lead to violent clashes between radical Muslims and the PLO in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Le Col David Hachana, adviser on Arab affairs to the Israeli military government in Gaza, gave the assessment as a new leaflet from one fundamentalist group charged the PLO with accepting "the enemy state" of Israel.

Israeli troops and their Lebanese militia allies killed a Palestinian fighter and captured three on Wednesday in Israel's self-declared south Lebanon security zone, the army said.

Israeli military sources said the fighter belonged to the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP).

An adviser to Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat said he was optimistic that Middle East diplomatic moves were heading towards a breakthrough.

Bezzam Abu Sharif told Reuters that talks between the United States and the Soviet Union and developments in the Israeli government had breathed new life into the peace process.

Abu Sharif, one of the most moderate figures in the PLO said it now seemed likely the foreign ministers of Egypt, Israel and the United States would meet before the end of the month.

A Palestinian woman in her fifties was killed in the West Bank southern city of Hebron when an Israeli car ran over her, as Palestinians in the occupied territories continued their popular revolt against the Israeli occupation, reports said yesterday.

The oil terminal of the Suez-Mediterranean Arab Petroleum Pipelines Company (Sumed) at Sidi Kreir, 32 km (20 miles) west of Alexandria, was to reopen at 1300 GMT. It had also been closed since Tuesday, (Reuters)

Egyptian ports reopen: Alexandria port reopened on Thursday after a two-day closure forced by strong winds and high seas, port officials said.

Ships had been trapped inside the harbour and others were kept waiting outside since the port was closed on Tuesday at 1300 GMT by winds of up to 30 km per hour (21 miles per hour).

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Lebanon snowbound: Snow covered the tops of Lebanon's mountains in the east and the west area and closed roads.

Weather reports said today that the temperature that dropped lower than zero degrees in the mountain area reached three degrees in Beirut.

It added that the cold and rainy weather will continue on all Lebanon and snow will cover areas at 800 metres height. (Kuna)

Sharon waves from within his car.



Running for safety
A Lebanese vegetable vendor runs for safety at the Museum Crossing, as Christian warring armies fought heavy battle for supremacy. (Reuters wirephoto)

Turkey ready to co-operate

Euphrates waters

BAGHDAD, Feb 16, (AP): A senior Turkish official said his country is ready to co-operate with Iraq and Syria in utilising water resources of the Euphrates River, according to a published report today.

The state-run weekly Alef Baa (AB) quoted Isin Celebi, a Turkish state minister as saying, "we are ready to set up joint ventures with both Syria and Iraq to make use of the water of the river."

Celebi, who visited Iraq this week, told the magazine that Ankara resumed the normal flow of water in the river on Monday after cutting it Jan 13 to fill the reservoir at the giant Ataturk dam in southeastern Turkey.

Celebi was sent by Turkish President Turgut Ozal with a letter to Iraq's President Saddam Hussein to alleviate Iraq's fears that Turkey's ambitious irrigation and hydropower plans will affect Iraq's agriculture.

He also conducted economic talks with Iraq's Minister of Trade and Finance Mohammed Medhi Saleh.

The Iraq news agency said Celebi and Saleh signed a new financial accord but gave no further details.

"I have told all the Iraq officials I have met that Turkey meant no harm to Iraq and its decision to cut the flow in the Euphrates was for purely technical reasons and not politically motivated," Celebi told Alef Baa.

Both Iraq and Syria warned that the cutoff of water would cause damage to their agriculture

and industry.

Celebi did not say what kind of projects Turkey is ready to set up in co-operation with Iraq and Syria on the Euphrates.

Ankara has proposed plans to supply water to Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states with water in pipelines extending from south Turkey through Syria and Iraq to the Arabian peninsula.

One project, named "peace pipeline," envisages the supply of 600,000 cubic metres of fresh water daily for irrigation and drinking to the Gulf countries through a 3900-kilometre (2423-mile) pipeline.

But no Gulf country has expressed interest yet.

Iraq has called on Turkey to open tripartite talks for the countries using the Euphrates for a water-sharing agreement that could end the dispute between Iraq, Syria and Turkey over the Euphrates.

Iraq has suggested Feb 20 as a starting date for the talks in one of the three capitals.

The last meeting attended by delegations from the three countries was held in Damascus Dec 3 to discuss the Turkish cutoff of the river flow.

Meanwhile Turkish Premier Yildirim Akbulut will travel to Tehran Feb 27 for an official visit viewed as another step in mending ties strained by the neighbours' different approaches to Islam.

Last April the two countries withdrew their ambassadors when Turkey protested Iranian interference in its internal affairs.

West Germany sells weapons to Saudis

MUNICH, Feb 16, (AP): The West German government has approved the sale of Gepard anti-aircraft systems to Saudi Arabia, and deliveries of two strategic submarines to Israel, a newspaper reported today.

The independent Sueddeutsche Zeitung said the Krauss-Maffei Company in Munich had applied for permission to deliver about 100 Gepard systems to Saudi Arabia.

The Munich-based newspaper said the sale was approved by the national security council at a recent meeting.

The Gepard systems are outfitted with 35-mm cannons designed to shoot down low-flying aircraft. The systems are mounted on bodies of Leopard tanks.

The newspaper said the security council also approved a request by the Deutschen Werft AG shipbuilding company in Kiel to sell "two strategic submarines to Israel."

The report did not give a further description of the submarines.

The sale of submarines was approved despite misgivings on the part of West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, the newspaper said.

West Germany's main opposition Social Democratic Party (SPD) has criticised the sales and charged the government is violating laws that ban arms exports to areas of conflict, such as the Middle East, according to the report.

Israel, Syria exchange 'feelers'

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM, Feb 16, (Reuters): Israel and Syria, its bitterest Arab foe, have exchanged informal "feelers" in a step towards peace, Israeli sources said yesterday.

But Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, asked by a journalist to comment on reports of informal talks between the two sides, possibly on a peace agreement, replied: "I regret to say that it's not true."

The sources, who declined to be identified, said Syria was softening mainly because its key backer, the Soviet Union, had cut arms supplies and urged Damascus to change its diplomatic posture.

"There were feelers for a month or two. There are signs of change in the Syrian approach," one source told Reuters.

In Damascus, Foreign Minister Farouq Al Shara said in a statement: "These reports are baseless. There has been no direct or indirect talks between Syrian and Israeli officials on any level."

An accord between Syria and Israel, who have fought in four Middle East conflicts, would remove a major source of Middle East tension.

Israel captured the Golan Heights from Syria in the 1967 Middle East war and annexed the area in 1981. Damascus says it must regain the strategic plateau.

The Israeli sources said Moscow had urged Damascus to wake up to the changes sweeping Eastern Europe and other parts of the world and abandon its goal of strategic parity with Israel.

The London newspaper the Independent reported yesterday that envoys of the two countries had held informal talks.

The daily, quoting Arab and Western diplomats, reported the talks fell short of direct formal negotiations but had the approval of both Shamir and Syrian President Hafez Al Assad.

Officials in Israel's foreign and defence ministries denied knowing of the two meetings which the newspaper said had taken place in Austria over the last four months.

The "feelers" emerge at a time when Syria faces an economic crisis, a quagmire in Lebanon, tensions with Iraq and cooler relations with its guardian Soviet ally.

Moscow asks Israel to stop settling Jews in held areas

MOSCOW, Feb 16, (Agencies): The Soviet Union has called on Israel to stop settling immigrant Jews in occupied Arab territories and labelled Arab countries as conventional in thinking that the Soviet Union was a totalitarian state capable of solving all problems by imposing restrictions.

First Deputy Foreign Minister Yuli Vorontsov was quoted by Soviet weekly Moscow News as saying, "some still did not understand that the Soviet Union is no longer the state they knew some years ago."

Vorontsov noted that the US restrictions on immigrant Soviet Jews were meant to divert the influx of Jews to the occupied Arab territories.

"During the past years, we were accused of imposing restrictions on Soviet Jews emigration and when we cancelled them Washington imposed its own restrictions," he said.

Vorontsov indicated that the Supreme Soviet would pass the new travel law which enables thousands of Jews to reach Israel saying the law ensures the right of travel for all Soviet citizens without exceptions.

He stressed that the Soviet Union would adhere to that law whether the others liked it or not.

Jewish settlers in the Israeli-occupied territories have threatened to kill any Palestinians who attacked their settlements in protest at Soviet immigration.

"If someone tries to use gun-fire against Jews, he will be killed...if someone shoots you, you can shoot back," said Moshe Yogeib, a leader of the ultra-nationalist Jewish settler movement Gush Eretz. ("This is a war.")

Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek urged today that Israel give up the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip in order to concentrate on absorbing the hundreds of thousands of Soviet Jews expected to immigrate to Israel.

"The absorption in human and material resources needed for the absorption of these immigrants is so vast that I maintain it is impossible to continue at the same time to occupy the West Bank and Gaza," the mayor said.

Cross-border visits agreed

Iran, Soviet Union sign accord

MOSCOW, Feb 16, (Reuters): The Soviet Union, dogged by unrest in several of its Muslim republics, signed two protocols with Iran to make cross-border visits easier and asked Tehran to help return calm to their frontier, Tehran Radio reported.

It quoted Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Mahmoud Vaezi as saying the Kremlin should "treat the people in a prudent and peaceful manner."

Vaezi told the visiting Soviet Deputy Minister for Protocol and Consular Affairs, Bros Chaplin, the agreements were in line with the demands of Soviet Azeris and other Muslims living near the two countries' 1,740-km (1,080-mile) frontier.

Chaplin asked Vaezi for Iran's help to resolve problems of security and stability on the border, the radio said.

Tens of thousands of Soviet Azeris illegally crossed into Iran

after they burned border posts in a series of demonstrations starting on Dec 31.

A similar number of Iranians also went to Soviet Azerbaijan, but Iranian media dismissed reports in Moscow's official press that Azeri nationalists fighting the central government received weapons from across the border.

Tehran Radio on Wednesday urged Moscow not to use violence in Tajikistan, a Muslim republic in central Asia where 37 people were killed in ethnic riots this week. Last month Iran expressed regret about Moscow's use of force in Azerbaijan.

Iran, which sees itself as protector of Muslims around the world, says people in both republics are striving to regain their Islamic identity after President Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms ended decades of rigid communist rule.

Quake shakes Shahrud: An earthquake measuring 5.2 degrees on the Richter Scale shook Shahrud 210 miles (340 kilometres) east of Tehran on Friday, the Islamic Republic News Agency reported.

No damage or casualty reports from the town were mentioned in the report, monitored in Cyprus. (AP)

Iran's growth rate rises: Iran's population growth rate, already one of the world's highest, has risen to 3.26 per cent a year, the Iranian News Agency Iran said on Thursday.

It said Iran, where abortion is illegal and many Muslim clerics oppose birth control, now has more than 55 million people.

Officials last year voiced concern at an annual 3.2 per cent growth rate revealed by a census in 1986. (Reuters)

Mubarak to visit Moscow: President Hosni Mubarak is expected to start a three-day state visit to the Soviet Union March 19, his first since he came to power following the assassination of his predecessor, Anwar Sadat in 1981, the Middle East News Agency reported Wednesday.

The state-owned agency gave no details for Mubarak's trip but his talks with Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev were expected to deal with bilateral relations, the Middle East and Soviet Jewish emigration to Israel. (AP)

Iranian drug kingpin killed: Law-enforcement agents killed a notorious drug kingpin identified as Baluch Esmail-Zehi in Western Iran, Tehran radio reported Thursday.

The broadcast said Esmail-Zehi, also known as Hajj Baluch Shabbakshah, was killed by agents of Iran's revolutionary committees, which are responsible for enforcing the law throughout the country. (AP)

Monarchs discuss Arab rifts

RIYADH, Feb 16, (AP): King Fahd and King Hussein of Jordan met behind closed doors yesterday to discuss ways of ending the rift between Iraq and Syria and to pave the way for an urgent Arab summit, diplomatic sources reported.

The sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the two monarchs also discussed the fighting in Lebanon, ways of curbing Soviet Jewish emigration to Israel and other pressing issues when they met at the guest palace in Riyadh.

The two monarchs held a first round of talks on Wednesday with senior aides present.

Hussein arrived in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday for consultations with Fahd after calling for an emergency Arab summit to discuss Soviet Jewish emigration to Israel.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation has also been pressing for a summit because the prospect of hundreds of thousands of Soviet Jews settling in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip has raised widespread alarm.

The occupied zones, captured in 1967, roughly encompass the independent Palestinian state proclaimed by the Palestine National Council, the PLO's permanent-in-exile, in November 1988.

Israel committed to 'VOA station'

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM, Feb 16, (UPI): Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir said yesterday that he was committed to building a Voice of America relay station in Israel that has been criticised by environmental groups and senior military officials.

Shamir told Malcolm Forbes Jr., chairman of the US board of international broadcasting, that Israel will fulfil its 1987 agreement with the United States to build a VOA transmitting station in southern Israel, Shamir's spokesman Avi Pazner said.

Call to revive Iraqi-Syrian front against Israel

KUWAIT, Feb 16, (Agencies): Jordan's Parliament Speaker Sulaiman Arar yesterday urged President Hafez Assad of Syria to take practical steps to revive the so-called eastern front facing Israel, Radio Damascus said in a broadcast monitored in Kuwait.

"We urge you to take actual steps to remove differences and clear relations, in order to build a unified Arab stand capable of confronting the challenges facing our nation," the radio quoted Arar as saying in a cable to Assad.

Arar also called for closer co-operation between "Jordan, Syria and Iraq in all fields, particularly in the defence field."

The "eastern front" against Israel was first formed after the third Arab-Israeli war in June 1967, but was frozen after the eruption of a political and ideological war between fellow Arab states Iraq and Syria. Rival branches of socialist Ba'ath parties govern Baghdad and Damascus.

As well as Syria, the "eastern front" includes Iraq, Jordan and the PLO.

"(Iraq, Syria and Jordan) should be committed to one eastern front supported by all Arabs collectively," Arar said.

In a related development, King Hussein of Jordan held further discussions yesterday in

Saudi Arabia with Saudi King Fahd, amid reports that the two leaders were exerting efforts to reconcile Iraq and Syria.

Arab government officials said Fahd and Hussein, who returned home to Amman, Jordan later in the day, want to pave the way for the convening of an urgent Arab summit to discuss various issues, including the emigration of Soviet Jews to Israel and the continuing crisis in Lebanon between rival Christian factions.

Diplomats said the release of the message might indicate Damascus would respond to it positively.

Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek urged today that Israel give up the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip in order to concentrate on absorbing the hundreds of thousands of Soviet Jews expected to immigrate to Israel.

"The absorption in human and material resources needed for the absorption of these immigrants is so vast that I maintain it is impossible to continue at the same time to occupy the West Bank and Gaza," the mayor said.

Meet a neighbour

His most important mission is the spread of Islam

Majid Al Refai

By Jadranka Porter
Arab Times staff

MAJID AL REFAI, a 31-year-old Kuwaiti, is in a hurry. Much is wrong with today's world, he says, and somebody has to do something about it.

"I want to be part of that effort, I have no time for rest" he insists.

A staunch follower of Islamic faith and a crusader at heart, Majid aspires to leave his mark in different spheres of life, the war-front in Afghanistan, banking and finance and lives of individuals.

With several degrees from the prestigious American Purdue University, good understanding of the Western lifestyle and Eastern traditions, and boundless energy, Majid, has already made a difference.

Under his chairmanship, the Lajnat Al Dawa Al Islamiyah, a multimillion charity organisation, has saved lives of thousands of Afghan refugees and mujahideen.

A chemical engineer-turned-banker he is a fervent promoter of Islamic banking which, he says, has dealt away with usury. He is about to set up an investment company to be based in Luxembourg and run on Islamic principles.

But perhaps his most important mission is to spread Islam, bring back those who have "strayed" and enlist new followers.

The Muslim spirit, he says, has eroded over the past 2,000 years, but is now on the mend.

"Unlike the Europeans and Americans whose development peaked when they were far removed from Christianity, Arabs prospered when the practice of Islam was at its peak," he explains.

Articulate and knowledgeable Majid delivers his convictions with eloquence not entirely unlike that of American TV evangelists.

His blue eyes and strong American accent, inherited from his American mother, cannot distinguish his identity as Arab Muslim. But they do make him more interesting, even controversial.

Revered by some Muslims for his Islamic zeal, Majid is less popular among liberal Kuwaitis.

What earns him respect in one group is his undoing in another. And statements such as "I have two wives and won't stop at that number" do not endear him to some Muslim women, let alone

the Western.

But he insists that he is "bicultural" because "I understand the East, I understand the West, and I can live with both without renouncing my beliefs."

However, he leaves no doubt as to where he truly belongs.

"If you don't stick to Islam you will end up in a gutter" is his message to the faithful and warning to non-believers.

Having been born and bred in the US, (I sang in a church choir before I ever went to a mosque), Majid feels particularly fit to explain Islam to Westerners.

Islam, he says, is powerful and possessive religion, it tells you how to live.

"Ten commandments are not enough. They tell you thou shalt not commit adultery, but what if you do?" he asks.

Islam prescribes all of man's actions and spells out punishment for those who fail.

While the Aids-infected homosexuals in the US are asking themselves, is God upset with us, the Arab says know exactly where they stand, he says.

Islam gives a homosexual three days to repent, if he doesn't he deserves death by being pushed from a high place. This is Islamic justice, he explains.

Christianity is love, but Islam is justice" stresses Majid.

Where there is no justice, such as in Afghanistan, Muslims should bring it, he says. He admires the mujahideen struggle as a rare example of a 20th century Islamic Jihad. But instead of first building mosques there he Lajnat Al Dawa Al Islamiyah embarked on transferring thousands of wounded fighters from inside the war front to their Pakistan border health units.

Aspiring to run the charity in a professional and efficient manner Majid also led efforts to provide basic services in refugee camps, cultivate crops, train paramedics and teachers and dig wells. Future projects include a KD200,000 orphanage and \$1.5 million high school. Twenty-five ambulance cars are shortly to arrive in Afghanistan and plans are under way for the organization to buy, equip and staff a unit in a proposed eye hospital.

Far from the war front, another aspect of Islamic justice can be found in Islamic banking which rejects the concept of interest.

Had Islamic banking principles been followed the world would have been saved from the debt crisis, contends Majid. "The Western banking practices have

brought the Third World countries down on their knees" he says.

To preclude misuse of funds the Islamic banks do not loan funds but instead buy equipment and material for projects. They are engaged in a continuous process of buying and selling and profits from such transactions are distributed among depositors. The Islamic financial institutions have much more sympathy for those facing a liquidity crisis.

Describing the Western banks, he contends. Demands for increased interest payments from the debtors he said: "The man is dying and what do they do, they ask him to run another mile."

But banking is not the only area of conflict in Western and Islamic practices. The two worlds have traded accusations over social issues with Muslims blaming the Western lifestyle for social ills such as crime, drugs and divorce.

Although Majid selects effective examples from the West to portray its "decadence" he admits that Arabs are equally guilty of poor conduct and harmful habits. He is anxious to draw

the line between Arab traditions and practices, and Islam.

The issue of women and their position in the society has been a traditional subject of dispute between Muslims and Westerners.

"Women in the West are treated like animals. That is why they rebelled, they have to challenge the men" he says contrary to the Western perceptions. Majid contends that in Islam women are given their identity, they are protected and respected. "They have the right to retain their name after marriage, to inherit property and to vote, although the right to vote is still denied in many Arab countries."

In fact, Majid says he holds women in higher esteem than men. "They are as smart as men, but more honest, kinder and not as dogmatic as men" he claims. "This is what makes them good converts."

But none of these qualities are sufficient to make woman a leader, says Majid.

"Man is a leader but he is not a dictator," he stresses.

Woman's role is clearly defined in Islam, her home and her children are her domain, he says.

But he admits that a man can

easily divorce a woman, and then she can lose her "domain." But the Muslim divorcees are not as destitute as an outsider would be tempted to think.

"Although everyone wants a virgin, divorcees, too, can find a match" says Majid.

The question of polygamy is not a contentious issue for Majid.

"It is a progressive solution to a social problem," he says. The "social problem" can be created by wars which leave many women unprotected, woman's inability to have children or if the man is oversexed, he explains.

Critics of polygamy, he says, have yet to recognise that having more than one legal wife is fairer than being married to one and having several mistresses.

As for women, they don't like polygamy but they tolerate it. "I didn't force my wives to marry me" he says laconically.

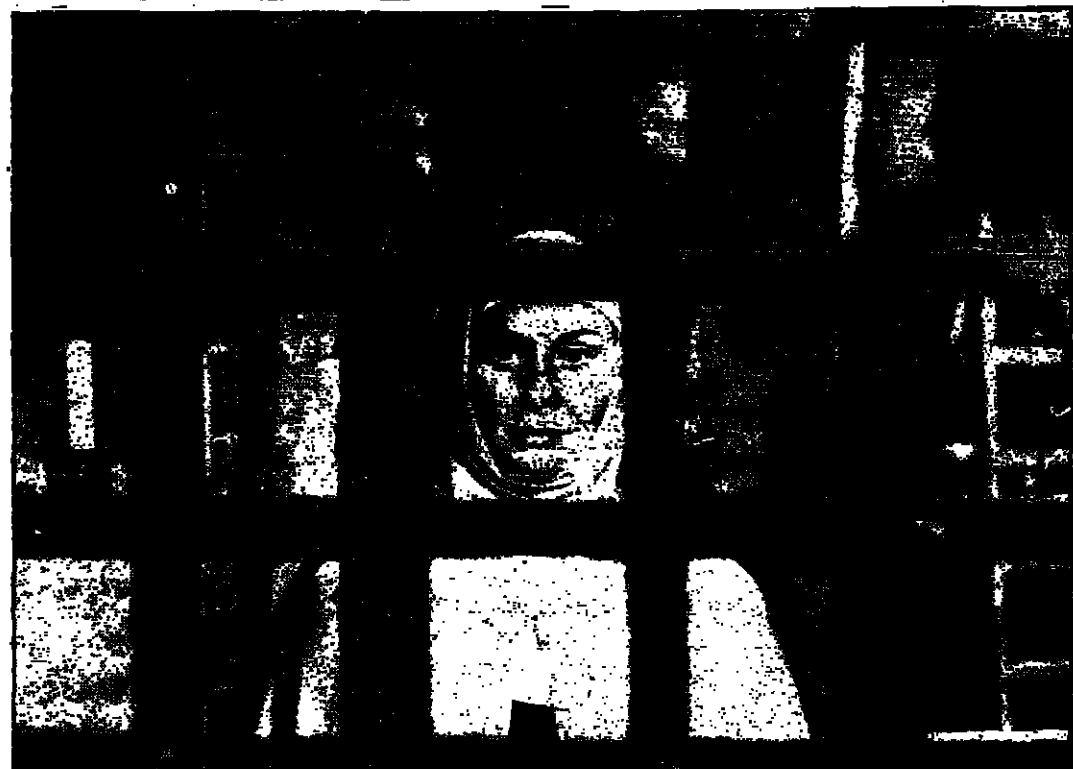
The law is black and white on all these issues for a man who tries to live by the Holy Quran. In his view that is not difficult as "Islam never goes against human nature."

But if Islam is perfect, man is fallible.

"We are people, not gods" he concludes.



Majid comforts an Afghan refugee girl at a health unit in Pakistan.



French Film Festival

REVERED DIALOGUES: In 1789 and at start of stage of terror Blanch takes up sisterhood. In her uncertainties of her loyalist Blanch had to pay heavily. To be screened today at 7:30 pm at the Chamber of Commerce. The film is directed by Philippine Agostini (1960) and is starring Jeanne Moreau and Pierre Brasseur auditorium.

BBC World Service

Interpol: behind the myth

As borders between countries become more relaxed and communications become easier the opportunities for international criminals multiply. Fighting this growing threat is Interpol, a body shrouded in secrecy. Since its inception in 1923 almost 150 countries have joined the organisation and developed a network for police co-operation worldwide. In two thirty-minute programmes Mike Bullen goes behind the scenes at Interpol and gets a unique insight into its operations.

Sunday, February 18 at 19:15 and Monday, February 19 at 16:30 and 16:30.

Health feature/phone in

Health Feature: Saturday, February 17 at 14:15 and Sunday, February 18 at 17:01.

Health phone-in: Sunday, February 18 at 16:15 and Monday, February 19 at 09:30 and 13:01.

Stories by Katherine Mansfield

Joanna David reads Feuille d'Album by the New Zealand writer Katherine Mansfield. Set in Paris it is the story of a young English artist who is shy and rather lonely and captivated by a young girl who lives across the street from his studio. But how does he get to know her?

Friday, February 23 at 14:15

Jazz score

Ronnie Scott, Acker Bilk, Digby Fairweather and Dick Charlesworth answer questions and revive memories on the subject of jazz in this quiz from the Hazlitt Theatre, Maidstone chaired by Peter Clayton.

Sunday, February 18 at 06:30

Monday, February 19 at 20:15 and Wednesday, February 21 at 11:30.

Recommended frequencies are:

17.64/17.01 m
15.07/19.91 m
11.76/25.51 m

TELEVISION PROGRAMME

KTV 1

MORNING PERIOD
9.30 The Opening and Holy Quran
9.40 Sabah Al Kher News
9.50 Cartoon serial
10.15 Magazine D'Actualite (repetition)
10.30 Sabah Al Kher News
10.40 Shuaa Min al Madhi: Arabic serial (part 6)
11.25 Sabah Al Kher News
11.30 Wadaan Zaman Al Samt: Weekly Arabic serial (part 7)
12.25 News Summary
12.30 Sabah Al Kher Final
12.35 Holy Quran and Closures

KTV 2

6.00 Opening Announcement & Holy Quran
6.10 The Adventures of Raggedy and Andy: A cartoon series for children
6.30 Orphans of the wild "Elephants" A look at elephants body structure, their lust for life...A look at operations for rescuing animals.
7.00 The Ultimate Machine: A look at the human mind...its effect on body dynamics and concentration.
7.30 The Hogan Family "You bet your life" David loses bet on a football match where he gets involved with the broker.
8.00 News in English
8.30 Quantum Leap "Disco Inferno" "Al" the invisible man notices that "Chris" who is fond of music is about to face certain difficulties Sam appears like Chris' eldest brother so he may convince him to change his course of life.
9.30 The Nuclear Weapons Eps. 3. The negotiations between the two great powers to control and reduce nuclear weapons starting from Salt I and Salt II agreements.
10.30 Movie "The Blue Lighthouse" Starring: John Elliot, Rebecca Celling. A diamond merchant sends an adventurer to Australia to get a precious diamond from a miner who plans to hide the diamond away...
12.00 News in Brief
12.30 Magazine D'Actualite

Evening Period

4.00 The Opening and Holy Quran
4.15 The World Today via Satellite (repetition)
4.45 Sabah Al Fadh: Cartoon serial
5.15 The Young Artist: Local Children Programme, prepared and presented by Mohammed Al Sheikh
5.45 Night Chemists, Airlines and official advertisements
6.00 Wa Qala Hakeem: Historical serial (part 8)
7.00 Varieties
7.15 Noor Al Islam: Religious programme, prepared and presented by Ahmad Abdul Qader.
7.45 Cultural programme
8.00 Security and citizens: Local programme
8.30 Good Evening and local news
9.00 News in Arabic
9.45 Daerat Al Andath: Local programme, prepared and presented by Kameel Abdul Jaleel.
10.15 Ahlam Sagheera: Local serial (part 8)
11.00 Thaib Al Nashma: Beduin serial, starring Ghannem Al Saleh, Ali Al Mufdeed, Roushi Al Safadi and Mahmoud Abu Ghareeb.
12.30 News Summary

Seven a side tourney

ACOI Overseas is pleased to announce their first one day tournament which will be held on the 2nd of March 1990, at the Al Sour Grounds. For further information please contact organisers - Casimiro D'Souza or Albert Leitao.

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WHAT'S ON

ARTS

Seminar

THE seminar at the DAA, on Arabic and European Art in The Light of Zodiacal Symbolism has been postponed. It will be given during the period Feb 11 - March 11, 1990. Morning sessions on Sunday and Tuesday 11.00 - 12.30 am or evening session on Sunday and Tuesday 6.00 - 7.30 pm. Registration may be made by phoning the Dar Al Athar Al Islamiyyah. Tel: 2430826, 2453259.

Hobby Centre

FELTCRAFT as a medium for children to make pictures, flowers, toys etc. with felt. This new craft course will start February 27th and March 4th for 6 weeks for children from 8 years old Tel: 5618847, 5317354.

Dar Al Athar Al Islamiyyah

14 Feb. Architecture of Mamluk Jerusalem exhibition, opening 4.30 pm co-organized by the British Council Wed 14 February - Wed 21 February. This is a specially designed photographic exhibition which is accompanied by wall text and is on display for only a week. Dr Bourgoyne who will give a lecture in Arabic and in English is author of the architectural catalogue which accompanies the exhibition.

SOCIAL

Carnival Dinner Nite

Carnival dinner nite by the Entertainers will be held at the SAS Hotel (The Tent) with music provided by Top Ranks & Perfect Strangers, on 22nd Feb. 1990 from 20.30 hours onwards. Highlights of the evening: Parade by K-Momo, Crowning of Carnival Queen, Ramba Samba dance competition. Group prizes, and many other surprises. For further details please contact: The Organisers, Chopsticks Chinese takeaway. Tel: 5617243.

Kuwait Welsh Society

ST. DAVID'S Day buffet dance Thursday 1st March 1990. At Messiah Beach Hotel. For ticket reservations & more information ring 3713467, 3912384, 5625316.

Shaheed Day

THE Bangladesh Association, Kuwait, will hold a cultural function on the occasion of "Shaheed Day" on Feb 24, at 6.30 pm at the Bangladesh embassy premises, Khalidiya. Mr. K. M. Shehabuddin, the ambassador, will be the chief guest.

All Bangladeshis are invited.

Flute recital

PRESENTED by a group of 4 young Austrian artists at the Kuwait International Hotel on 24th February at 8.00 pm. Winners of the first prize at the Youth Musicians' Festival in Austria, they have recorded for the radio and television in Italy, Luxembourg, Switzerland, USSR, Egypt and Austria. In the Terrace Room. Tel: 2530000 ext 8039/8040

Oil and Gas Catalogue Show

THE Commercial Service of the American embassy announces an "Oil and Gas Catalogue Show" at the Kuwait Continental Hotel during Feb 19-20, 1990, between 8.30 am and 8.30 pm. Catalogues of more than 200 US companies in the Oil and Gas industry will be displayed. Interested firms are invited to attend.

For further information please contact: Abdulla Mejalli. Tel: 2424151 ext 267. Fax: 2407368.

Robbie in the lobby

ROBBIE 2002 a remote control robot over 1.2 metre tall will be performing in the main lobby of the Kuwait International Hotel on 23rd, 24th and 25th February at 2.00 pm and 6.00 pm. It can greet, talk, rotate, bow backwards and forwards, tap dance and perform many other tricks to entertain children of all ages. It has made over 200 television appearances the most successful being the British TV Quiz show 3.2.1 having over 17 million viewers and was seen across the world. Tickets on sale now. KD1.000 per person. Tel: 2530000 ext 8040.

Bite n' Pieces

An interesting 8 week course in patchwork and quilting techniques. For details contact Tel: 5634663.

Handicrafts exhibition

UNDER the auspices of the Minister of Interior, Sheikh Salim Al Sabah, an exhibition of handicrafts for young Kuwaiti boys and girls will be opening on February 24 until February 28 at the Kuwait Regency Palace. For more information contact Salwa Al Harbi on 4835398.

British Council

LECTURE: ACCESS COURSES FOR YOUR FIRST DEGREE Monday 19 February at 6.00 pm: A special talk for students from non-British schools (and their parents) who would like to go to Britain for their degree after they have finished school. There will be lots of information about the different routes that overseas students can take to gain entrance to a British Degree Course. The talk will be followed by a question and answer session. Everyone is welcome. There is no admission charge but please telephone us to reserve your seat. Tel: 253 3204/253 3227 and ask for the education office.

Hotel Meridien Kuwait

Envy Thai cuisine every Saturday night at La Brasserie in addition to its daily lavish buffet. Thai specialties are prepared by the chef in front of guests.

COWBOY NIGHT

EVERY SUNDAY: Enjoy live country music, western decor and hearty ranch food - prime ribs, burgers, tacos and great desserts including mom's apple pie. Visit La Brasserie for a real country boe down. EVERY MONDAY NIGHT AT LA BRASSERIE: Enjoy Chinese cuisine in addition to its lavish daily buffet. Chinese specialties are prepared in front of guests.

Children's variety show

RANGDHANU, a children's variety show which includes a play, will be staged on March 1, Thursday at the Theatre Hall of Kuwait University Law Faculty, Shuwaikh campus, at 6.30 pm. For cards contact 4840759, 4312730, 4312280, 4733106 or 3729425.

Indian Cuisine Centre

Indian art of fancied lac bangles and designful henna work comes live at the finest Indian cuisine centre of Kuwait at the Maharaja Palace Restaurant. Come savour the delicacies whilst giving your lady a gift to cherish. For more information contact 2406150.

ACOI seven-a-side

ACOI overseas is pleased to announce their first one day football tournament which will be held on the March 2, 1990, at the Sour Grounds. For further information contact Casimiro D'Souza or Menno Leitao at the Sour Grounds.

Singapore festival

SAS Kuwait Hotel will feature Singapore festival on 20th and 21st February at The Tent. The oriental extravaganza will present lion dancers, Chinese dancers, finger painter plus elaborate buffet of popular Singaporean recipes prepared by Singaporean chefs. First of its kind in Kuwait, the show was put up in co-ordination with Singapore Tourist Promotion Board and Singapore Airlines and aims to foster closer relations between the two countries. Tickets available at SAS hotel. For reservations, please call 5657000 ext 401 or 403.

II Annual one act Play Competition

INDIAN Arts Circle announces the II Annual One Play Competition to be held in May 1990. The competition is open to Plays in any Indian language including English. Awards shall include Best Play (1st, 2nd & 3rd), Best Director, Best Actor & Actress, Best Child Actor, Best Stage Setting and Best Acting Performance from each team. Registration form with rules & regulations are available from Indian Arts Circle office at Funaitees. Last date of submitting registration form with required details is 28th February, 1990.

Please contact IAC office (Tel. 3904817) for further details. All Indian associations engaged in theatrical activities are requested to join.

Now at the MBH Sports Centre

Life saving course, with Royal Life Saving Society Coach, Grade I Examiner will be commencing shortly. Ergocycle Fitness Computer tests and courses now available at Messiah.

Jazzercise/Aerobics/Staying power/Yoga and Ballet exercise classes also available.

Tivim Centre

"TIVIM Centre is pleased to announce their 3rd Annual 9-a-side Inter Village Football Tournament which will be held on the Sour grounds, Kuwait City, beginning March 27/28th 1990. For further information please contact organisers - 2441860 Casimiro.

Craft

South Yemen sets major wage rises to end strikes

ADEN, South Yemen, Feb. 16, (AP): The government has ordered big wage increases after more than a month of strikes that would have been banned before South Yemen brought in its own "perestroika."

A late-night radio announcement Thursday said the increases would range from 18 dinars (\$52) a month for the lowest wages to 60 dinars (\$176) a month for the highest.

The announcement came after a meeting of the central committee of the ruling Yemeni Socialist Party led by Secretary-general Ali Salem Al Beidh.

The minimum wage for manual and white-collar workers in the country, mainly concentrated in Aden, the capital and Red Sea Port, is 60 dinars (\$176) a month.

For the lowest category, the increase is 30 per cent. Higher wages are around 150 dinars (\$440) a month.

The strikes began in early January at a research centre of the Ministry of Education and spread to several government offices as well as the Aden refinery, the major printing house and the country's main textile mill.

The vital port facility continued to operate normally, however.

The workers would show up at their offices or plants but do not work except in emergencies, returning to their homes at closing time.

Party officials introduced special squads to maintain operations and avert a total breakdown of operations at the sites where strikes occurred.

It was not possible to gauge the impact of the wage hikes as today is the weekly Muslim holiday, but life was expected to return to normal at the start of the work week tomorrow.

Until recently strikes were forbidden but the leadership has been emulating Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's perestroika in recent months, especially in the economic sector. South Yemen became the Arab world's only Marxist-ruled country shortly after it gained independence from Britain in 1967.

The only public demonstrations by workers that people remember in Aden was in the early 1970s when they took to the streets to clamour for wage cuts to help the government face economic duress.

At that time, minimum wages were in the vicinity of 100 dinars (\$294) a month.

South Yemen is moving toward unity with the pro-Western North Yemen and residents began complaining of a rising cost of living when border restrictions were eased between the two countries in recent months.

US trade deficit dips

WASHINGTON, Feb. 16, (Reuters): The American trade deficit fell by a wider-than-expected 30.3 per cent in December to \$7.17 billion, helping the United States to its best yearly trade performance in five years, the Commerce Department said today.

For the year, the deficit slid to \$108.6 billion from \$118.5 billion in 1988. It was the lowest shortfall since 1984, when it was \$106.7 billion.

The December figure was the lowest monthly trade deficit in five years since a \$6.79 billion gap in December 1984.

The improvement in the monthly deficit during December exceeded analysts' expectations that it would fall to a \$9.8 billion trade gap from November's \$10.3 billion.

December's unexpectedly good figure lifted the dollar and bonds to brief gains. But both later fell back to show only slight gains.

Imports fell 5.9 per cent during December to \$38.3 billion, as oil purchases from abroad fell despite the bitterly cold month. Exports rose 2.4 per cent to \$31.1 billion.

The November trade deficit was revised down to \$10.3 billion from the previously reported \$10.5 billion but was still the biggest monthly deficit in 1989.

Currency rates

KUWAIT, Feb. 16, (Kunar): Following are the international currency rates as quoted by local banks and announced by the Central Bank of Kuwait yesterday.		
	Buying	Selling
US dollar	0.28014	0.29129
Sterling	0.4091	0.40432
DM	0.17254	0.17375
Sfr	0.19355	0.19497
FF	0.05072	0.05110
Ir	0.000272	0.000238
Jay yen	0.002007	0.0020186
Bah din	0.7660	0.77236
UAEDH	0.07899	0.07933
S ryal	0.07733	0.07769
O ryal	0.07667	0.08006
O ryal	0.75341	0.75689

Investment firm to lay off thousands

Drexel winds down some operations

NEW YORK, Feb. 16, (UPI): Drexel Burnham Lambert Group Inc. wound down affairs at many of its subsidiaries Wednesday and put its most negotiable securities holdings on the auction block in the aftermath of filing for bankruptcy protection.

The Wall Street investment firm was expected to lay off at least 3,500 of its 5,300 employees today in the financial sector's most dramatic cutbacks to date. The fall of Drexel, which led the debt-fuelled takeover frenzy of the late 1980s, was seen as bringing down a final curtain on that era.

Drexel president Frederick Joseph filed a petition for relief under Chapter 11 of the US bankruptcy code late Tuesday in Federal Bankruptcy Court in Manhattan. The private investment firm acted after defaulting on \$100 million in loans and beginning to sell off its bond holdings.

The company, which pioneered the use of high-yield, high-risk junk bonds to finance corporate takeovers, had been hammered since September by a precipitous decline in the junk bond market.

Drexel's petition listed total assets of \$3.69 billion and

liabilities of \$2.89 billion, including secured debt of \$75 million, unsecured debt of \$269 million and "other liabilities" of \$2.52 billion. The filing was believed to be the largest bankruptcy in Wall Street history.

Some Drexel operations continued Wednesday, although employees were uncertain about their futures. "We're not quite sure," said one who requested anonymity. "The equity division might be sold off, so we're just waiting to see."

Drexel ceased its over-the-counter trading, a national association of securities dealers official said. A Wall Street source said the firm cleared its Nasd inventory and would not resume trading.

In New York Mercantile Exchange oil futures trading Drexel's accounts and positions were transferred to other members in an "orderly winding down" of its affairs, an exchange official said. Drexel's Canadian branch asked that its membership on the Toronto Stock Exchange be suspended.

Drexel remained active on the New York Stock Exchange, where its Drexel Burnham Lambert Specialist Corp. continued to trade in 33 issues.

A spokesman for the American Stock Exchange said the Drexel specialist in 58 Amex-listed issues was "dealing as usual."

As on Tuesday, Drexel accepted only liquidation orders for all-cash transactions on the sugar and cocoa exchange in New York. The Chicago Board of Trade said Drexel met all financial requirements for commodities trading, but did not specify if Drexel was actively trading.

Wall Street sources said securities dealers and institutional investors were picking up Drexel's stock of government and agency securities — the most negotiable part of its entire investment portfolio. But questions remained as to how it would dispose of its devalued junk bonds.

Markets were calm in the aftermath of the company's collapse. Most financial analysts said there was no reason to fear a wider crisis.

"I think they slipped below the waves without a ripple," said Roger Craig, a fixed-income portfolio director for Banc One Asset Management Corp. in Columbus, Ohio. "It's a non-event, except for the junk (bonds)."

A White House spokesman

said Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady "continues to keep in touch" with the Federal Reserve Board and the Securities and Exchange Commission, which oversaw Drexel's operations.

A Fed spokesman defended the central bank's decision not to take measures to rescue the firm. "Our role isn't to save a private corporation," he said. "Our role is to make sure the financial markets aren't disrupted."

Drexel's investment and government securities subsidiaries were not included in the bankruptcy filing. Wall Street sources said it was probable that Drexel Burnham Lambert Inc. and Drexel Burnham Lambert Government Securities Inc. would go out of business once their assets were liquidated.

But analyst Gary Hovis of Argus Research said he believed the holding company had a chance of emerging from bankruptcy "a viable but very slimmed-down firm," built around its government securities unit.

Drexel had a 1989 loss of about \$40 million due to legal costs incurred in a federal investigation of alleged insider trading. In 1988 it agreed to pay \$650 million in penalties to settle



Businessmen survey a pile of stock quotation equipment removed from the Drexel Burnham Lambert building in lower Manhattan on Feb. 14. The junk bond giant filed for Chapter 11 of the Federal Bankruptcy Code on Feb. 13. (Reuters wirephoto)

federal charges.

Most concern focused on Drexel's considerable junk bond holdings, which were not thought likely to attract many buyers. Ironically, though, the junk bond market that Drexel played a chief role in launching

rallied as its former mover and shaker floundered.

Business professor Marshall Bloom of the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania offered one explanation. "In some ways there was an over-

hang over the market because of the (legal and other) problems Drexel was having, and that has been removed," he said.

But there were no takers as Drexel's credit dried up, the firm was unable to continue normal trading.

Contractors seek govt compensation

Jordan to unify exchange rates

AMMAN, Feb. 16, (Reuters): Jordan, implementing IMF-agreed economic reforms, will abolish its two-tier exchange rate for the dinar this month, the Central Bank announced.

The official news agency Petra said yesterday the Central Bank had told banks the rate would be unified on February 17.

The International Monetary Fund, which offered Jordan a standby credit in July, generally favours a unified, realistic exchange rate. An IMF team is due in Amman soon to agree performance criteria for this year.

The Central Bank also said it would sell dollars at 675 fils and buy them at 671 fils, and instructed banks not to resell dollars for more than 675 fils. The dinar has 1,000 fils.

Since August the Central Bank has maintained an official rate, set yesterday at 659/662 fils to the dollar, for imports of medicine and subsidised food, fees of Jordanians studying abroad and remittances of foreign farm workers.

Banks were theoretically free to set their own exchange rates, but the Central Bank made small, periodic interventions and asked banks not to diverge from the rates it suggested.

In recent months the Central Bank has sought to close the gap between the official and bank prices by allowing the official rate to sink slowly against the dollar and intervening to boost the bank rate, currently 675 fils to the dollar.

The Central Bank, helped by an infusion of Arab aid in

Debt rescheduling pact

AMMAN, Feb. 16, (Reuters): Jordan has signed debt rescheduling agreements with France and Austria in line with its accord with government creditors grouped in the Paris Club.

A French diplomat said an agreement signed on Monday covered rescheduling of interest and principal payments due in 1989 and 1990 on treasury loans of \$5.5 million and on government-guaranteed commercial loans of \$129 million.

Repayments are spread over 10 years with five years' grace starting in 1991 during which only interest will be paid. Interest charged on treasury loans will be three per cent and on commercial loans at OECD-agreed commercial rates.

The rescheduling covers the principal and interest that was due in the first half of 1989 and the principal and 50 per cent of the interest due in the second half.

The diplomat said Jordan and France signed a separate repayment facility to reschedule over three years \$12.5 million of short-term loans for military and other purposes. Jordan also signed a rescheduling agreement with Austria this week for \$13.5 million in payments on government and state-guaranteed loans, the official news agency Petra said.

It said the accord rescheduled principal payments due in the second half of 1989 over 10 years starting in 1990, including a five year grace period in which only interest would be paid.

August, has effectively braked a slide in the dinar, which previously hit a black market low of 940 fils to the dollar.

Bankers praise the Central Bank's success in stabilising the dinar, but some worry that it has now overvalued the currency, eroding the new competitive edge of Jordanian exporters.

They say the currency would be vulnerable if Jordan runs into balance of payments difficulties again, though officials voice confidence that Amman can meet its foreign obligations.

In another development Jordan's contracting firms may go out of business if the government does not compensate them for losses caused by the devaluation of the dinar, the head of the contractors association said yesterday.

"Our situation is deteriorating day by day," Ali Abu Ragheb, president of the Jordanian Contractors Association, told Reuters. "We are facing a crisis."

He said the fate of more than 100 firms with public sector contracts was at stake due to the slide in the dinar, which has lost over two-fifths of its dollar value since 1988.

The devaluation had more than doubled the cost of imported construction materials, he said.

"... We would have been eligible for compensation had the government officially devalued the dinar," he said. "But since it was the Central Bank that took measures to regulate the dinar, contractors have to prove their cases in court."

By calling forcefully for comparable treatment of creditors, the Paris Club could be setting the stage for a showdown between Poland and its commercial bank creditors, diplomats said.

In practice, banks have often had to wait months or even years for interest payments from hard-pressed debtor countries. But, as Trichet acknowledged, they have never agreed to include in a formal rescheduling agreement the postponement of all interest payments.

Vice-Finance Minister Janusz Sawicki, who led the Polish delegation to the Paris Club talks, expressed confidence that the banks would agree appropriate terms, but he said no date had yet been set for negotiations.

He welcomed today's accord, saying it would open the door to the fresh capital that was indispensable if Poland was to succeed in transforming its economy along market lines after 40 years of communist central planning.

President Mikhail S. Gorbachev's nearly five-year tenure as Soviet leader has led to numerous upheavals in politics and society, but few official proposals have the ideological sweep of the proposed private property law.

Yesterday, the government appealed for approval of the private property law. "If we want to have a market economy and take part in the international market-place, then we need such a law," Justice Minister Veniamin F. Yakovlev said in defence of the proposal to establish private property rights.

The new group appears to have formed in opposition to deputies from the three Baltic republics, which are trying to restore their independence, and the Inter-Regional group, an organization of

Poland signs debt agreement

PARIS, Feb. 16, (Reuters): Poland's Western government creditors gave a vote of confidence today to its solidarity-led government by agreeing to reschedule a record \$9.4 billion of debt payments.

"This is a good agreement that demonstrates a willingness to do as much as possible to help Poland in its efforts," Jean-Claude Trichet, the chairman of the 17-nation Paris Club of official creditors told a news conference.

The accord, clinched after two days of talks, will postpone for 14 years the payment of \$9.4 billion in principal and interest — the largest sum yet rescheduled by the Paris Club.

The total includes \$3.4 billion in late payments that were outstanding at the end of 1989 as well as all the interest and debt repayments due until the end of March 1991.

Trichet, the director of the French Treasury, said the fact that governments had managed to agree so quickly to reschedule such a large sum was testimony to their readiness to help Poland at a time of historic political and economic change.

"It's the most extraordinary agreement we've ever had," he said. The Paris Club, which holds about \$27 billion of Poland's \$40 billion foreign debt, now expected commercial bank creditors to make an equally exceptional response.

"We could not imagine in the present circumstances a formula for the rescheduling of bank debt that is not at least as favourable as the formula agreed by the club," Trichet said.

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Bombay shares

Bombay Stock Exchange prices (Rs) Feb 16, 1990			
	Pr. Close	Open	Close
ACC	341	341	340
Alcan Chem	—	—	—
Alu Nis	—	—	—
Ani Fab	83	81	82
Asabok	216.25	215	212.50
Asia Paint	40	38.50	40
Auto Corp	379.37	375	382.54
Bajaj Auto	392.50	392.50	398.75
Bar Rayon	697.50	702.50	712.50
Blow Plast	190	189.50	192
Bom Dye	96	95	96
BK Band	80	77.50	83.75
Burr Wal	—	—	—
Cashmere	3100	3100	3175
Con Enka	183.75	185	183.75
Con Spg	950	950	970
Colgate	14	13	14
Cromt Gr	31.50	31	32
DCM	62	60	62.50
Deep Fert	80.50	80.50	80.50
Dunlop	679.49	679.49	690.07
El Hoteis	126.25	127.50	128.75
Esar Sp	104	103	105.50
Food Sgl	48	48	49
Forbes	43.50	43.50	44
Gar Poly	94	94	96
GNFC	38.50	39	40
Grasim	111.50	112	113.50
GE Shpg	46.65	47	47.50
GEFC	170	168.75	171.25
Guj Alki	79	78	80.50
Guj Heavy	15	14.50	15.50
Hero Honda	18	16	18
Hind Ciba	116	116	123.50
Hind Lever	108	104	106
Hind Motor	144	143	145
Hindalco	24.75	24.50	25
Hoechst	1570	1560	1595
Ingersoll	215	210	215
ITC	54	52	53
Ind Org	54	54	54.50
Ind Rayon	88.50	88.50	89
JK Syn	190	190	193.75
Kin Long	55	53.50	54
Kir Cumm	146	146	146
KSB Pumps	197.50	195	201.25
L & T	64	64	65
Lipton	90	90	92.50
Mac Russel	160	157.50	162.50
Mad Coats	110	108	108
Mahindra	75	72.50	73.75
Mas Share	17	16.85	17.25
Mico	860	875	870
Midfield	220	217.50	225
Moli Ltd	51	58	55
MRF Ltd	245	248	242.50
Muk Iron	133.50	133	135
Nat Org	1290	1300	1320
Nippon	41.50	41	42
Orkay	16.25	16	16.25
Oswal Agro	45	44.50	46
Pesco	87	86.25	86.25
Ponds	205	207.50	202.50
Prem Auto	64.75	64.50	65
Ranbaxy	91	90	92.50
Ray Wool	75	74.50	74
Reckitt	205	202.50	206.25
Reliance	56.50	57.50	59.50
Ses Gon Mach	—	—	84.25
Shree Wall	—	—	—
Shree Chem	55	53	55
Shri Fib	—	—	—

Compiled by Kuwaiti International Exchange Co.

Tokyo shares

Nikkei stock average, 37460.32 (+11.67)																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																											
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Scotland Yard museum

Bizarre tribute to police success

LONDON. (Reuter): Scotland Yard's Black Museum is not for the squeamish nor the faint of heart. Closed to the public, the dimly-lit chamber's grisly exhibits include bits of victims from one of Britain's most horrific series of murders and the glistening steel used to slice them up. Death masks of executed criminals stare down at visitors and the ropes by which they were hanged give a macabre atmosphere to Room 101 of London's Metropolitan police headquarters. Founded last century this chamber of horrors charts 850 cases cracked by "The Met," founded by Sir Robert Peel in 1892 when policing was simpler and justice was harsher. By far the most stomach-churning display is a bath, cooker, pots and knives used by serial killer Dennis Nilsen to butcher and dispose of many of his up to 18 victims. "I lose about five visitors a week in here (when they faint)," Bill Waddell, the dark-suited curator tells a small party of guests selected by senior police officers. Nilsen cut up and boiled his victims then crammed them down sewers. "Any of you cook?" asked Waddell. "Well that's human stock," he said pointing to a glutinous chunk. A detective visiting Nilsen's bedsit lifted the lid of a pot and found a head. "Are you always that white? Waddell asks an increasingly pallid visitor. "If you're going to faint, the collapse in then bath and we won't have to worry about you."

The museum is used to train officers but is also a bizarre tribute to some of the police's most successful cases covering murder, terrorism and forgery. Painsstaking investigations using pathology, forensic science and ballistics are on display as well as some unusual exhibits such as a pane of glass bearing an ear-print that led to the conviction of one man. Waddell, a trained criminologist who served 30 years in the police force before becoming curator, uses black humour but says the museum is a salutary experience not to be trivialised.

The faint-hearted are advised not to visit the "Black Museum." Grisly exhibits include victims from one of Britain's most horrific series of murders, and glistening steel used to slice them up—"human stock" and "severed forearms" floating ominously in glass cases and "fantasy weapons." And no one can smile at the end of the tour!

Sepia photographs from late last century show the disembowelled victims of Jack the Ripper who terrorised London's gas-lit streets and who was never caught.

Other spine-chilling murders detailed include that of John Christie, a necrophiliac, who killed up to seven women. The cruelty of notorious London gangs of the 1960s is shown by an electric generator used to torture victims. "One gang leader used to nail you to the floor," Waddell said.

There is a vice section complete with whips, spurs, shackles and flogging frame removed from brothels.

Weapons

In another part of the museum, two severed forearms float ominously in a glass case. They belonged to a suspect who shot himself in Cologne and Scotland Yard asked for fingerprints.

The Germans sent the arms. A typical example of Teutonic efficiency," Waddell smiles.

Also one show is possible the world's smallest murder weapon, a pallet used to kill Bulgarian dissident Georgi Markov in 1978 in London contained just 0.2 milligrams of poison.

One glass case illuminates a scribbled note from a London police officer to a special air service colonel which led to the elite regiment storming Iran's London Embassy to end a 1980 hostage siege.

The mangled helmet of a trooper of Queen Elizabeth's household cavalry who was killed by an Irish guerrilla's nail bomb in 1982 is a savage reminder of the effects of terrorism.

A collection of bombs spans relatively simple devices, a suitcase with a clock which triggered a pistol to fire into dynamite, to the most advanced explosives used by Irish fighter trying to oust Britain from Northern Ireland.

Brandishing a US-made Ingram M-11 machine gun taken from a guerrilla, Waddell said it was possible that criminals would soon start to use such powerful weapons.

The museum boasts an arsenal, all of which had been used in the last two years, of pistols, rifles and machetes and one martial arts chain which "could break a neck like a carrot."

Fantasy

Gadgets include binoculars that shoots spikes through the eyes sent to a girlfriend by a jealous lover, a barbed flail which can tear the scalp off a head and various other "fantasy" weapons first seen in horror films.

Waddell's face clouds at the stand which houses the tunic of a policeman stabbed more than 40 times by a mob at a London housing estate. "They wanted to put a policeman's head on a pole that night and they nearly succeeded."

Weird Al explodes like custard pie on screen

It's the craziest game show to hit television... the pungent Wheel of Fish. And coming soon will be the TV premiere of the muscle-clenching movie Conan the Librarian.

All you have to do sample these off-beat television shows, and the whacky schedule packed with many more, is to tune in to channel 62. And you will find that little outfit in a new movie called UHF, which stars Hollywood's hottest, daftest new property.

Icons in Tinseltown are already reaching for their checkbooks as they watch "Weird Al" Yankovic, the new Robin Williams laugh-alike.

Before Al exploded like a custard pie on to the big screen, he penned a number of memorable musical classics. It was his whose parody version of Michael Jack-

son's Beat it was transformed into Eat It. And Madonna's like a Virgin was newly-minted as like a Surgeon. Queen's another One Bites the dust became a chortling Another One Rides the Bus.

Al was chuckling all the way to the bank, after making seven albums and two award-winning videos. Then it was the turn of the cinema to stand up and be laughed at.

In UHF, no star is safe, however big or muscular they are.

Al makes a mockery of Sylvester Stallone a Rambo. For one of the dream sequences, he dons latex rubber muscles—complete with bulging veins, criss-crossed scars and spray—on sweat.

And Harrison Ford's Indiana Jones character is seen in a new light, too.

In the plot a funny thing hap-

pens to that television station called Channel 62. George Newman—played by Al—is elated when his Uncle Harvey wins it in a poker game.

For zany George, who has never managed to hold down a job for more than 24 hours, is appointed manager. "Uncle Harvey works on the principle that the station is so bad it can't get any worse."

And, amazingly, George's daft game shows and off-beat programmes succeed like crazy. His long-suffering girlfriend Teri, played by Victoria Jackson, can't believe it. The audiences, for example, just like going for a spin with that hauntingly familiar Wheel of Fish.

But all is not sunshine and laughter as George becomes locked in a ratings battle with a rival station.



George and his Aunt Esther, played by Sue Anne Langdon.

Science

Radiation study concerns scientists

SPOKANE, Washington. (UPI): Scientists studying what the radiation exposure levels around the Hanford Nuclear Reservation were during the cold war are trying to decide how to break the news of their preliminary findings to northwest residents.

The initial announcement of results from the first-ever study on the question is due in April, and the task of releasing the date is fraught with dangers of misinterpretation.

"We're walking such a fine line," said Mary Lou Blazek, Hanford programmes manager for the Oregon Energy Department in Salem, vice-chairperson of a panel of independent scientists overseeing the \$15 million Energy Department multi-phase study of radiation exposure from Hanford.

The Hanford Environmental Dose Reconstruction Project, conducted by the government contractor Battelle Pacific Northwest Laboratories, was launched after the public learned for the first time in 1986 of massive radiation releases from Hanford.

Blazek said the initial announcement may involve hypotheticals, and stressed the information is subject to change as the study progresses.

"We may say if you were 16, and you lived in Pasco in '44-'46, and your food intake was this, then your dose could have been this," said Blazek.

Blazek, who chairs the communications sub-committee of the oversight panel, said scientists also may try to "explain what the

health consequences of a certain dose could be."

"It's difficult because of the science involved," she said. "It's difficult because there are so many variables involved. You have to make so many assumptions."

"Say you have X millirems. That is equivalent to what? We can't even agree on that in our own panel," she said.

The government said in 1986 that more than 500,000 curies of iodine-131 were released between 1945 and 1956 from Hanford during accidents and planned experiments. An estimated 15 to 24 curies were released during the 1979 Three Mile Island nuclear accident.

The studies under way are designed to estimate how much of the radiation people were exposed to in the 570-square-mile (1,470 sq km) site along the Columbia River in south central Washington.

Hanford, an old complex of military reactors that is now focusing on cleaning up extensive environmental contamination, helped build the first atomic bomb exploded in New Mexico, as well as the weapon that fell on Nagasaki.

Many Hanford "downwinders" claim the radiation releases have increased the cancer rate in the area.

A controversial and limited state study found cancer mortality rates near Hanford, are actually lower than the national average,

although the federal centres for disease control is preparing to conduct its own \$5 million study of cancer rates in the area.

The CDC has previously estimated some 20,000 children may have drunk milk exposed to radioactive iodine from Hanford.

The Hanford Dose Reconstruction project is planned in four phases and may continue through 1993. Results from the first phase will reflect its limited scope, Blazek said.

The first phase focuses on 10 counties closest to Hanford, Washington, and other states.

No decision has been made on whether future phases will expand the study east and south into more of rural Washington and Oregon and into Idaho, or north of the region, population centre around Spokane.

The study's first phase will estimate exposure to iodine 131, although future phases could look at other isotopes.

The initial phase will estimate exposure from airborne radiation from 1944 to 1947 and exposure through water from 1964 to 1966.

Indian tribes were not extensively studied in the first phase, but in later phases some eight northwest tribes are expected to participate. Scientists are interested in radiation exposure to Indians because their diets and lifestyles differed other populations.

While exposure levels have not been released, scientists have already come up with some potentially important conclusions.

All-American girl turns exotic European

HOLLYWOOD (UPI): Question: How does an all-US girl become an exotic Eastern European?

Answer: When she's cast in a movie titled *The Fourth War*.

The young woman in question is Lara Harris, who looks as if she were reared in Hungary, educated in Liechtenstein and currently living in Corfu. That's exotic.

To US eyes, including those of director John Frankenheimer, Harris appears to be 100 per cent European. No particular nationality, perhaps, but definitely from the "old country."

Her face is a seductive blend of Nastasia Kinski and Isabella Rossellini, which gives you some idea. She has large, luminous brown eyes, thick dark eyebrows, high cheek bones, Dresden China skin and short light brown hair.

She has a slight overbite, which heightens her beauty, as it did with Ingrid

Bergman and Gene Tierney.

Harris, moreover, has 2 distinctively demure demeanor, a self-confidence born of years of modeling in this country and abroad.

But she is no more foreign than any other 24-year-old Chicago native who attended the University of Illinois, not the Sorbonne.

After modeling in Paris and studying acting in New York, appearing in two minor films, Harris came to Hollywood a year ago.

She gave herself one month to find work as an actress. Within two weeks Frankenheimer hired her.

In *The Fourth War*, Harris portrays a Czechoslovakian defector, complete with authentic accent, who becomes involved in an international border incident in West Germany. Her character is a mysterious figure who is not all

what she appears to be.

Harris herself is intriguing because she is not what she appears to be either.

The other day at lunch in the Beverly Hills Hotel Polo Lounge she attracted considerable attention. She wore a plain white blouse, dark skirt and no jewelry. She did, indeed, give the appearance of a European star.

"John (Frankenheimer) had agreed to see me for the part because my agent told him I had studied Russian in college," Harris said in a distinguishable Midwest accent.

"I can't speak Russian, but I can do English with a Slavic dialect. I have an ear for it," she said.

She demonstrated with a sentence or two an accent that perfectly matched her appearance.

John had already started the film on location without a leading lady in Cal-

gary (Canada) and had looked at foreign actresses for weeks without success.

"Of course I was nervous and excited, I worried whether my accent would be good enough to play an Eastern European Girl."

"After the reading, John said, O.K. good. You got the part." I came back to New York to get some warm clothes and two days later was working in the picture.

"It was a thrill. It happened so fast; I had been working hard without much success and all of a sudden I found myself acting in a big, important picture. I felt it was a kind of destiny thing."

"There was little about the Czechoslovakian political dissident that I could relate to. I've never known anyone like her and on top of that, she really isn't what she professes to be."

"She's not feminine either. John doesn't direct women in a feminine way.

The women in his pictures go along with the men.

"I play a very tough girl, which is against my basic nature. It was difficult to do. In one scene in which I was running for my life, John called out, 'quit running like a debutante.'"

"I can understand why I was cast as a European. People immediately mistake me for a European tourist or immigrant."

"When I see myself on screen I definitely recognise the foreign factor and I think that's fascinating. I love working with dialect and making the transformation. It allows me a choice."

"Producers and directors mostly cast for American parts and they're looking for actresses who exemplified American types. I have been told many times I look too foreign, too European, too moody, too dark, too everything for parts they are trying to fill."

Toy fair 1990: a preview

Video controls replace pretty, wacky, witty toys

NEW YORK. (UPI): Nintendo-crazed youths who have all but abandoned their toy chests in favour of video control pads have made it a rough couple of years for the country's \$13.25 million-a-year toy industry.

Traditional toys—no matter how bold, pretty, wacky or witty—have failed to match the phenomenal appeal of Nintendo entertainment systems, the wildly successful video games that racked up sales of \$2.7 billion last year. That's the equivalent of 20 per cent of all toys sold.

In the face of such formidable competition, toy makers are to unveil conservative product lines for 1990—including spin-offs of old standbys and variations on earlier successes—when the American International Toy Fair opens this week in New York.

New toys for boys, the heaviest Nintendo users, were among the most eagerly awaited introductions.

Topping the list: Dick Tracy action figures based on the movie about the square-jawed detective scheduled for June release.

Playmates Toys Inc., the folks who gave the world teenage mutant Ninja turtles, plan to have a line of Dick Tracy figures and accessories on the market to coincide with the movie's release. Tracy, Sam Catchem and the infamous gangsters from the comic strip will retail for \$3.99 each.

As for the Ninja turtles line, which achieved sales of \$120 million last year, kids can look for a slew of new characters, including Panda Khan, Napoleon Bonafrog and Mondo Gecko, and new accessories such as oozy guns and a sewer seltzer cannon.

"Any action figure line that hits over \$50 million in its first year is considered a strong line and we think we're going to do over \$50 million with Dick Tracy," said Richard V. Sallis, senior vice president of Playmates. "The turtles, in their first year in 1988, did over \$23 million."

Another summer release movie, "Days of Thunder," is giving Matchbox Toys (USA) Ltd a chance to capture some of the boys market.

Matchbox plans a line of toy replicas of the Chevy Lumina race cars featured in the

movie about the stock-car circuit. They will retail for \$1.99, and the company expects to sell "as many as we can get our hands on," said John Barbour, vice president of marketing.

Analysts said movie tie-ins, however, are a bit risky.

"You can't take anything for granted when it comes to picking the good ones from the bad ones," said Barry Rothberg of Mabon, nugen O. "Batman was a good license, but then no one's made any money off Superman."

Hasbro Inc., the country's largest toymaker, continues to shy away from major introductions for boys, but thinks it has a winner in a line of new kids on the block action figures for girls.

Replicas of the new kids, five teenage rockers from Boston who have the same swoon-inducing effect on girls today that the early Beatles had on their mothers, were to sell for \$13.99 to \$5.99. Hasbro expected the group's fans to buy \$15 million to \$20 million worth of the line this year.

Having learned a hard lesson from the

boom-and-bust toys of a few years ago such as Cabbage Patch and Teddy Ruxpin dolls, toy makers, in general, are taking fewer risks, analysts said.

"The industry's economics are such that you could not possibly sustain the costs needed for a mega hit and have it flop," said David Eibowitz of American securities inc. "It's been a hard lesson for the industry to learn, but you don't go into toy fair projecting a mega-hit."

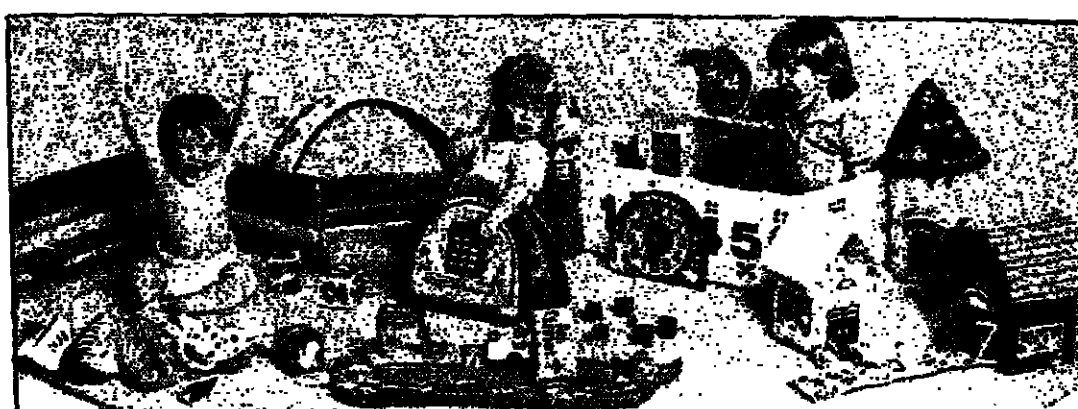
Indeed, a back-to-basics approach is expected to pervade toy fair this year "because the industry has been so unsuccessful with all the high-tech products," said Peter Reynolds, president of Brio Scanditoy Corp., a maker of wooden toys.

Dolls are poised to make a comeback after several years in the background.

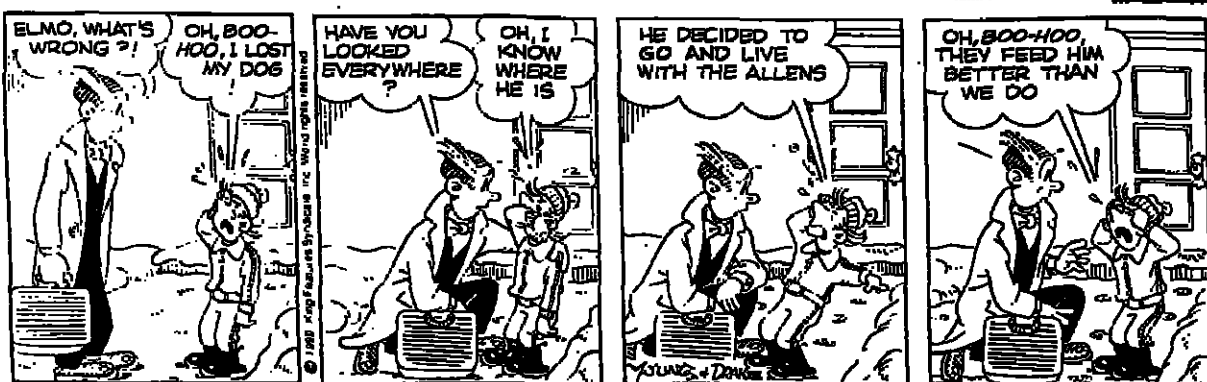
Even companies such as Tyco Toys, best-known for remote-control wizardry, matchbox, which has made die-cast cars for 40 years, and Ohio art, the producer of etch-a-sketch, are getting into the act, said Jody Levin, the communications director of the toy manufacturers.



Traditional toys—no matter how bold—have failed to match the phenomenal appeal of the wildly successful video games that racked up sales of \$2.7 billion last year—equivalent to 20 per cent of all toys sold.



BLONDIE By Dean Young & Stan Drake



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE By Dik Browne



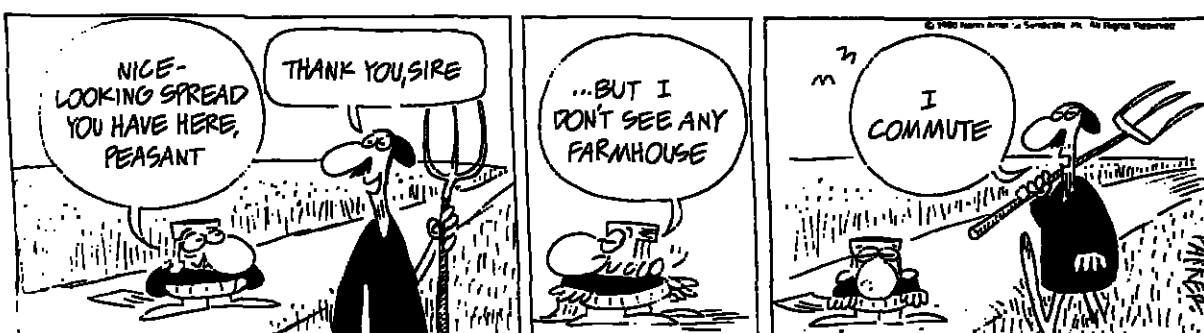
AGATHA CRUMM By Dik Browne



BEETLE BAILEY By Mort Walker



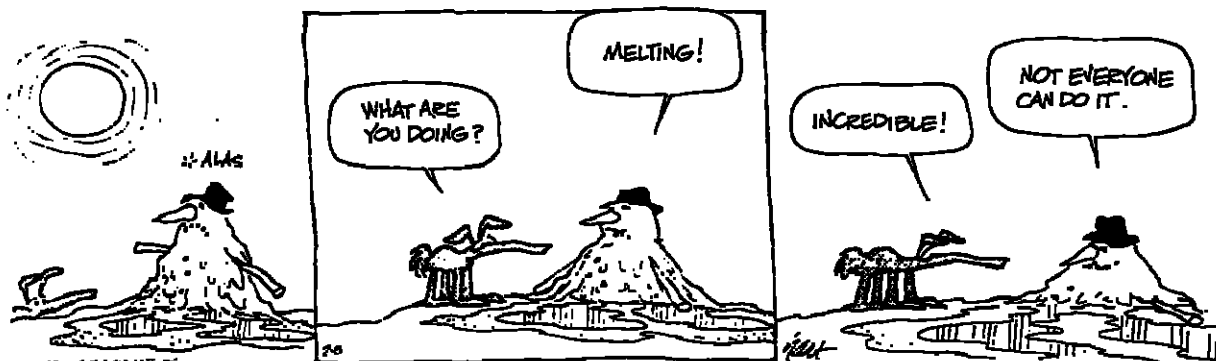
THE WIZARD OF ID By Brant Parker & Johnny Hart



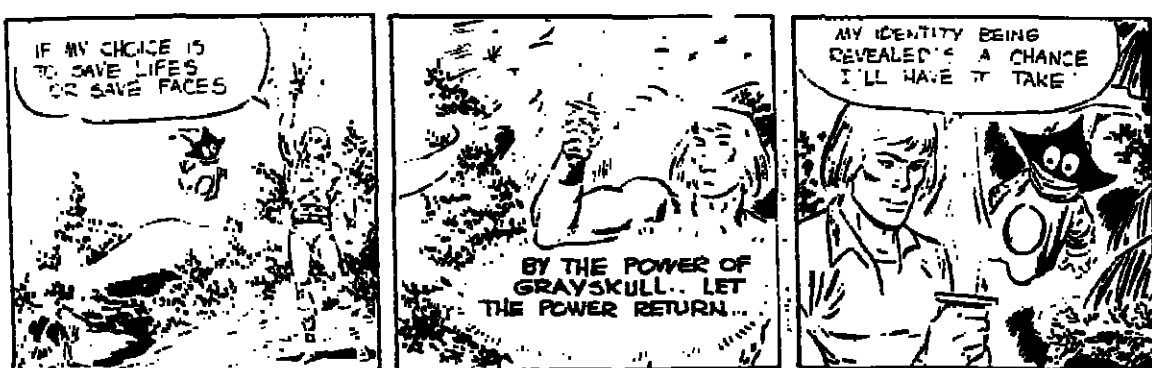
ANDY CAPP



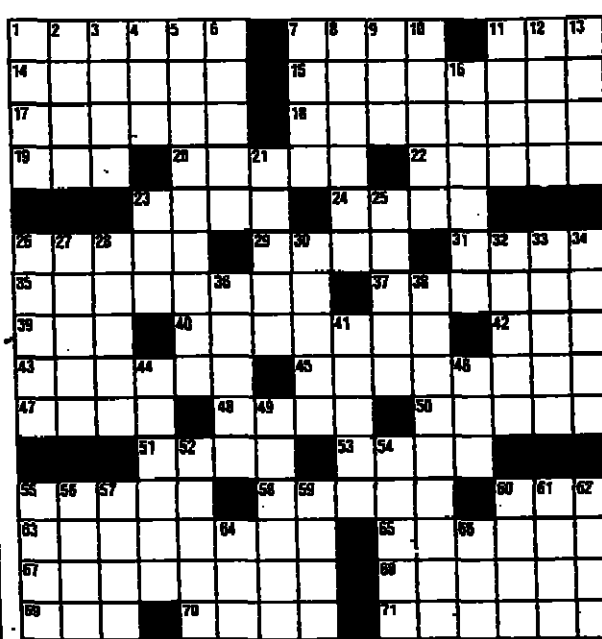
B.C. By Johnny Hart



HE-MAN By G. Forton & J. Shull



TODAY'S CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- Mountain
 - Nightingale's symbol
 - Greek letter
 - Colorful bird
 - Pertaining to bees
 - Air hole
 - Dry, as wine
 - Choreographer-director Bob
 - Related on mother's side
 - Neap or ebb
 - Iowa State sits
 - In the midst of
 - Narrative
 - Musical composition
 - Leftie
 - Bewail
 - Day star
 - Benedict
 - Arnold's crime
 - Nabokov
 - Box
 - Poem of fixed form
 - Stair section
 - Editor's note
 - States positively
 - City on the Arno
 - Fleet border
 - Protective garment
 - Rice dish
 - Landing craft
 - In a private session
 - Publisher
 - 51st psalm
 - Legally responsible
 - Shoe width
 - Soviet news
- DOWN**
- In a wise manner
 - Uncloses
 - to a poet
 - Uncommon
 - Actor Porter
 - Alder tree
 - Air battles
 - Arose
 - Junior miss
 - Earnest request
 - Nero's 1,002
 - Gay
 - Type size
 - Sentry's command
 - Arrow poison
 - Sometimes it's a king's
 - Bristles
 - Explosive
 - Honeydew
 - Donkeys
 - Hood or Olympus
 - Part of a pound
 - Cognizant
 - Norman
 - Beneath
 - RBI's etc.
 - Remove wrinkles
 - Region of S. Spain
 - Yuccalike plant
 - Place side by side
 - Genesis name
 - Candles
 - Lifeless
 - Train tracks
 - Pinnacle
 - Ballet
 - Caroline's daughter
 - March 15th, to Caesar
 - Grease monkey's job
 - Transfer property
 - Three-spotted card
 - Social affair
 - Droop

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE:

WING BRADS BANS
ADIR REBUT ALIA
ROSA AMATTI RIMO
PLAYMISTYFORME
LID FREE
TACIT AOK ANNUL
EVAN UNREST TRI
SINGINININHERAIN
TIT NOTICE ARES
SNORT ASH STYLE
NEED SAT
UMBRELLA POLICY
AREA GUILLE ERIE
DINT ANNIE RATA
OSTE SATIED SEER

GOREN BRIDGE

BY CHARLES GOREN AND OMAR SHARIF
AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION

Both vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH

♠ K 8 5

♥ A Q J 9 4

♦ 7 5

♣ A Q 7

WEST

♠ 3

♥ 10 8 7 6 2

♦ 10 9 2

♣ J 9 6 5

EAST

♠ A Q 9

♥ 3

♦ A Q J 8 4 3

♣ 10 4 3

SOUTH

♠ J 10 7 6 4 2

♥ K 5

♦ K 6

♣ K 8 2

The bidding:

North East South West

1 ♥ 2 ♦ 2 ♣ Pass

4 ♣ Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: Ten of ♦

On this hand from a team match.

South's winning line is poetry itself.

That it is not all that easy to spot is

proved by the different results at the

two tables.

Both teams reached four spades

on identical auctions. Since North

had considerably more than a mini-

imum with good support for partner's

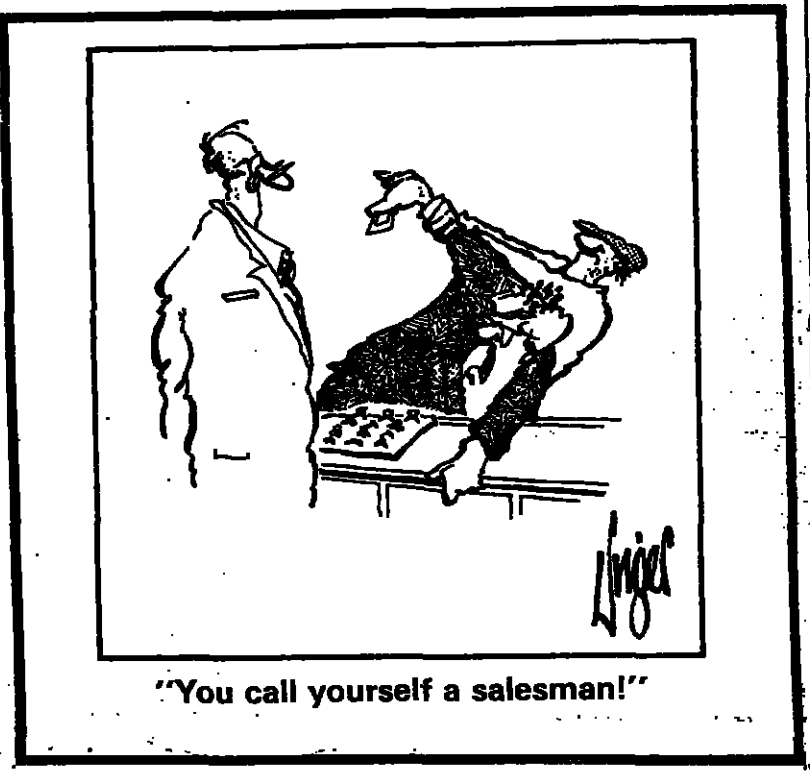
suit, a jump to four spades was

clearly warranted. Both Wests led the ten of diamonds and both Easts covered with the jack, conceding the first trick to declarer's king.

At one table declarer ran the jack of spades. East won the queen and shifted to the singleton heart. A trump to the king lost to the ace and East returned a low diamond. In with the nine, it was not too difficult for West to work out what was going on. He reverted to a heart and East's ruff spelled own one. Pretty defense.

At the other table, declarer returned a diamond at trick two! This simple maneuver broke communications between the defenders. East won and shifted to a heart, taken in the closed hand. Declarer also took the losing trump finesse, but here East had no way to get to his partner for a heart ruff. Declarer was able to win any return, force out the remaining high trump and once the last trump was drawn, claim his game.

Because the key to success lies in snipping the enemy communications, this technique has become known in the trade as the "Scissors Coup."



YOUR SIGN



Aries
March 21 - April 20
You are all too liable to rely on guesswork and may easily go wrong. Take good care of your personal appearance. Ensure that you take sufficient regular exercise. Be fair.



Cancer
June 21 - July 20
You are rather too liable to judge by appearances and should refrain. Nothing is quite as it seems, so beware. Do not leave things until the last minute. Be sincere.



Libra
Sept. 23 - Oct. 22
You are liable to take far too much for granted. Do not spend all or even most of your leisure viewing television. Take care you do not overspend because of a miscalculation. Be alert.



Capricorn
Dec. 21 - Jan. 19
If you expect to have all things your own way you will be disappointed. And if you ask for too much you will also be disappointed. Make sure you do not leave any doors or windows open when you leave home. Be generous.



Taurus
April 21 - May 20
If you have made a promise do keep it even if it is a little to do so. Avoid eating foods with which you are not familiar for the moment. Do not spend in the expectation of some winnings before you have received them. Be patient.



Leo
July 21 - Aug. 21
A letter for which you have been waiting will not contain the news you had hoped for. However there will be compensations. Do not expect to have all things your own way. Be tactful.



Scorpio
Oct. 23 - Nov. 22
Do not allow a grievance to grow out of all proportion and upset your judgements. And try to show a little more goodwill towards others. You should avoid saying anything you do not really mean. Be contented.



Aquarius
Jan. 20 - Feb. 19
You should not do things in a certain way merely because you have always done them that way. There could well be a better way. You will find a stimulus to your enthusiasm, but try to keep a sense of proportion.



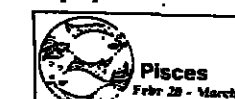
Gemini
May 21 - June 20
You would be wrong to do anything that is even remotely against the law. And if others do exceed limits that is no excuse for your doing so. Do not neglect a slight infection or it will worsen. Be sensible.



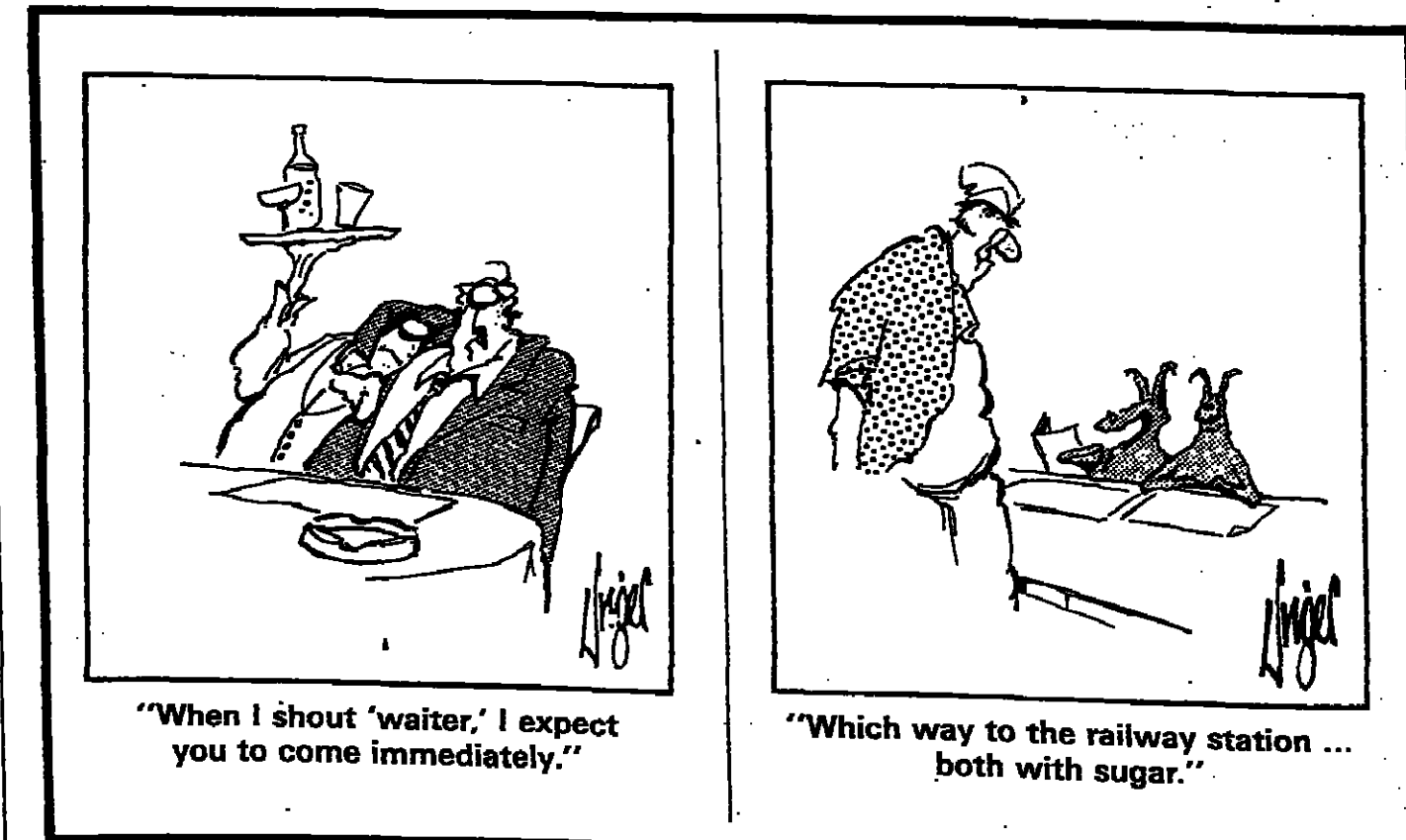
Virgo
Aug. 23 - Sept. 22
You are liable to worry about something that is unlikely to happen. Instead you should concentrate on what really is happening. Show just a little more interest in what interests your partner. Be moderate.



Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Start by doing what really has to be done and then relax the pace. If you do not put things back in the right place you may well get into a serious muddle.



Pisces
Febr. 20 - March 20
You will have to deal with a person who takes offense easily. Your lucky numbers are 15 and 37. Avoid telling others that you think of them in too blatant terms. And for your part do not be too sensitive to criticism. Be respectful.



Lewis set to keep place after impressive cricket debut

PORT-OF-SPAIN, Trinidad, Feb 16, (Reuters): Guyana-born Chris Lewis is set to retain his England place for the second one-day cricket international against West Indies here tomorrow after an impressive debut in Wednesday's rain-ruined opening match.

Lewis, having arrived in the Caribbean only on Sunday to

replace injured fellow pace bowler Ricardo Elcock, could play in an unchanged team ahead of Phillip DeFreitas.

Paceman DeFreitas is battling to recover from a twisted knee that ruled him out of the first 50 overs match which was abandoned without a result. England made 26 for one from 13 over in reply to West

Indies 208 for eight when the rain came. England captain Graham Gooch was very pleased with Lewis' performance, "especially he must have been very nervous."

Lewis took one for 30 in seven overs and was an outstanding contributor to the competitive out-

cricket which contained West Indies. He held a superbly judged catch at long-on with aplomb to dismiss Ezra Moseley.

Gooch said England would have to wait and see about reaction from DeFreitas' right knee, which he hurt while bowling shortly before the start of Wednesday's match.

Although Gooch said England's bowling had been a great improvement on that in the matches against the Leeward and Windward Islands, he considered his bowlers had still delivered too many full length balls which could be driven, unlike the West Indian attack.

We bowled too many "four

balls," the skipper said. Whatever the result of the five-Test series, England have already shown that in the remaining four one-day internationals they could run West Indies close.

Probable teams: West Indies — Viv Richards (captain), Gordon Greenidge, Desmond

Haynes, Richie Richardson, Carl Hooper, Carlisle Best, Jeff Dujon, Malcolm Marshall, Ezra Moseley, Ian Bishop, Courtney Walsh. England — Graham Gooch (captain), Wayne Larkins, Robin Smith, Allan Lamb, Alec Stewart, David Capel, Jack Russell, Chris Lewis, Gladstone Small, Eddie Hemmings, Angus Fraser.

Hick not allowed to play for Districts

HARARE, Feb 16, (Reuters): Zimbabwe's cricket officials, resigned to losing star batsman Graeme Hick to England, were disappointed yesterday to learn he would not be playing against the English A team this weekend.

Hick, who is seeking to qualify to play Test cricket for England, had asked the Test and County Cricket Board in London whether he could play for Zimbabwe Districts against the touring side in Sunday's one-day match but was advised not to.

"It's a great shame for our point of view," David Elman-Brown, Vice-president of the Zimbabwe Cricket Union (ZCU), told Reuters.

"But we've lived with the situation for a long time. We realise we've lost him, whether he plays for England this year or next year," he said.

Officials were anticipating a big crowd for Sunday's match at Harare South if the Zimbabwe-born Worcestershire batsman took the field in the first game of the England A's 10-match tour.

Hick's absence also highlights Zimbabwe's long-term loss as they strive to join the elite seven Test-playing nations.

The current tour is the first in which Zimbabwe will be participating in unofficial five-day Tests following the International Cricket Council's decision in July last year to give them a trial period before deciding whether to grant full Test status.

"It would have been wonderful if he (Hick) had supported Zimbabwe in their quest for Test cricket," Elman-Brown said.

The touring England cricket side left for Harare as scheduled yesterday after a stomach bug laid low half the team and forced cancellation of their third and last one-day cricket match in Nairobi on Wednesday.

Seven of the 14-strong squad were taken ill, although not seriously, after eating at a Nairobi restaurant on Tuesday.

Team manager Bob Bennett told reporters he regretted the match against the Kenya Cricket Association's Chairman's XI had to be cancelled.

The visitors beat Kenya in their first limited overs match by five wickets and then were beaten by the same margin in their second match.



Graeme Hick

Pakistan win easily

Rameez slams unbeaten ton



Waqaar Younus appeals for a lbw decision against Sri Lanka's Athula Samarasekera. (Reuters wirephoto)

HOBART, Australia, Feb 16, (Reuters): Opener Rameez Raja scored an unbeaten century to guide Pakistan to a comfortable six-wicket victory over Sri Lanka in their World Series Cup one-day match yesterday.

Pakistan scored 198 for four wickets off 48.3 overs after dismissing Sri Lanka for 195 and virtually assured themselves of a place in the three-match final against Australia beginning next week.

Rameez hit 116 from 150 balls to beat his previous highest score in one-day internationals by three runs.

Rameez and fellow opener Saeed Anwar attacked from the start, putting on a quick 46 before Saeed was dismissed for 17.

Pakistan stumbled slightly when Ejaz Ahmed was out for one four balls later but Rameez and Javed Miandad, who scored 42, took control of the match in a partnership worth 105 runs.

Sri Lanka had looked to be heading for a score over 200 when captain Arjuna Ranatunga, who scored 42, and Asanka Gurusanga, who hit 59, put on 73 runs for the fifth wicket.

But Pakistan's bowlers ripped through the middle order and tail to take the last six wickets for 44 runs. Waqaar Younus was Pakistan's most successful bowler, finishing with four for 39.

Scoreboard

SRI LANKA
Athula Samarasekera lbw b Younus 7
Brendon Kuruppu c Younus b Younus 1
Asanka Gurusanga b Younus 19
Hashan Tillekeratne b Imran 19
Aravinda de Silva c and b Asqib 5
Arjuna Ranatunga c Akram b Ghauri 42
Roshan Mahanama c Younis b Ghauri 24
Asoka de Silva b Younus 1
Rumesh Ratnayake c Younis b Akram 14
Graeme Labrooy c sub b Asqib 2
Kapila Wijegunewardene not out 2
Extras (lb-10 w-9 nb-2) 21
Total 195-47.5 overs
Fall of wickets: 1-62-25.3-62-4-79.5-151-6-152-7-158-8-187-9-193.

Bowling: Wasim Akram 9-2-23-1 (4w), Imran Khan 10-0-25-1, Waqaar Younus 10-2-39-4 (3w 2nb), Asqib Javed 8-5-0-44-2 (2w), Nadeem Ghouri 10-0-51-2.
PAKISTAN
Rameez Raja not out 116
Saeed Anwar b Ratnayake 17
Ejaz Ahmed lbw b Wijegunewardene 1
Javed Miandad c de Silva b Labrooy 42
Salim Malik run out 3
Salim Younis not out 10
Extras (lb-1 nb-4 w-4) 9
Total (for four wickets) 198
48.3 overs
Fall of wickets: 1-46-2-53-3-158-4-166.
Bowling: Graeme Labrooy 9-1-41-1 (2w), Rumesh Ratnayake 9-3-0-47-1 (2w), Kapila Wijegunewardene 10-1-34-1, Arjuna Ranatunga 10-0-37-0, Asoka de Silva 10-0-34-0.

Australia name team for tour

MELBOURNE, Feb 16, (Reuters): The Australian Test selectors have included injured trio Geoff Marsh, David Boon and paceman Merv Hughes in the Australian squad of 13 for the short one-Test tour of New Zealand next month.

The Australians leave on March 1 to play five one-day matches and a Test in Wellington. Marsh has not played since breaking his right thumb during the second Test against Pakistan in Adelaide in January while Boon and Hughes have both had surgery for right knee trouble.

Marsh played only two of a possible six Tests this summer but is expected to resume in Western Australian grade cricket this weekend while Boon has already returned to the crease.

An Australian Cricket Board spokesman said no one has been placed on standby but a replacement can be quickly sent to New Zealand if required.

Australia: Allan Border (captain), Geoff Marsh (vice-captain), Terry Alderman, David Boon, Greg Campbell, Ian Healy, Merv Hughes, Dean Jones, Simon O'Donnell, Carl Rackemann, Mark Taylor, Peter Taylor, Steve Waugh.

Rebels declined to quit tour

JOHANNESBURG, Feb 16, (Reuters): All 16 members of England's rebel cricket squad declined an offer to be released from the controversial tour of South Africa after demonstrations caused it to be shortened.

Team manager David Graveney said on Wednesday: "Mike Gatting and I spoke to the players yesterday after the announcement the tour was being shortened and we put two questions to them.

"The first was, did anyone want to go home now, and the unanimous answer was 'No'.

"The second was, were they keen to come back for a second tour, and they all said 'Yes', they had no regrets in coming here."

The planned itinerary was curtailed on Tuesday following protests at all four matches so far and threats of increased demonstrations. No decision on a planned second tour due to begin later this year has been taken.

Graveney said all the players were disappointed the second five-day match in Cape Town had been scrapped and they had no chance of squaring the series against South Africa after losing the first match in Johannesburg.



A South African riot policeman stops a protester demonstrating against the tour.

"They feel unfulfilled, in a cricketing sense," he said.

Graveney admitted it had been a "stressful" trip but had no regrets about having come. "I would do the same again," he said.

Gatting, who with the rest of the squad faces a five-year international ban for making the tour, refused comments that he had thrown away his career for what

will amount to a mere 16 days cricket.

"Everyone forgets that I wasn't going to the West Indies this year. The only tour I would have been selected," he said.

Gatting denied the tour had been a farce. He said that because of it the South African Cricket Union (Sacu) and the anti-tour National Sports Congress (NSC) had begun talks with each other.

is Hamilton Jordan's Tour and nobody knows where the hell he is. Nobody's seen him for five months.

"He doesn't know anything about tennis," McEnroe complained. "He's a politician and he knew how to take advantage of us."

The former world number one, who turned 31 today, admits he originally had high hopes for the new Tour, but he feels what has emerged is no improvement over the old regime.

McEnroe also criticised the new rankings system which only takes into account a player's best 14 results each year. He said the system will force players to enter more events than ever before and the result will be more injuries.

"It's absurd how few people are healthy," McEnroe said. "With the best-of-14 you're going to see guys throwing in the towel after a set instead of risking injury."

"These rules weren't made by people who supposedly cared about the players. It's a joke," added McEnroe, who said the new setup could well lead to his early retirement.

"That's probably what those jerks want, they don't want people who fight."

"I care but I have to lead my own life. I don't want to end up like some wacky nut case."

But McEnroe, one of the sport's biggest draws and most colourful players, said the athletes have been misled.

"This isn't the players Tour," said the fourth-ranked McEnroe after his third-round win. "This

is Hamilton Jordan's Tour and nobody knows where the hell he is. Nobody's seen him for five months."

Gilbert will next face Srebrer's countryman, 76th-ranked Peter Korda, who pulled off the day's lone upset by ousting 10th-seed Jaime Yzaga of Peru 7-6-6-4.

Sixth seed Tim Mayotte needed three sets for the second successive night, but advanced with a 6-2 4-6 6-2 victory over Mexican Jorge Lazo.

Mayotte's quarterfinal opponent will be fellow American Aaron Krickstein, the fourth-seeded Krickstein eliminated Australian John Fitzgerald, but complained he is still feeling the effects of a groin pull suffered in last month's Australian Open.

Less than two months into the new era in men's tennis, McEnroe has already become disillusioned with the ATP and chief executive officer Hamilton Jordan.

When the Association of Tennis Professionals took over running the men's Tour from the Men's Tennis Council this year, it was supposed to be for the good of the players.

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Rameez hit his best one-day score

India let down by poor fielding

HAMILTON, New Zealand, Feb 16, (Reuters): New Zealand's Northern Districts profited from poor Indian fielding to end the first day of their four-day match at 268 for five today.

Northern Districts is the bottom team in the current local Shell Trophy competition.

India's position improved in the last five minutes of play when pace bowler Anil Wasson captured two wickets in one over.

The Districts' total included a painstaking 101 by opening batsman Kyle Wealleans and half-centuries by David White and Grant Badburn.

India's first success came 50 minutes before tea, when they claimed Chris Kuggeleijn, the Districts' captain and one of two Test players in the home side.

The Indians made their toil on a slow pitch harder by dropping four chances, three of them in the slips.

Kuggeleijn was the first to be let off, although he took much less advantage than Wealleans who, dropped only five minutes afterwards, batted for 310 minutes.

Bradburn, the most aggressive of the Districts' batsmen, who was undefeated with 67, had his first escape at only 18 when Wasson failed to latch on to an uppish drive off Ajay Sharma.

Off the second new ball, he got away with a very straightforward slip chance to Chandrasekhar, at second slip, off Wasson.

However, Wasson gained some consolation in the last over of the day, having Grant McKenzie caught behind and Mark Bailey lbw to only the second ball he had faced in first-class cricket.

Four members of the touring Indian cricket team, including captain Mohammed Azharuddin, had their wallets robbed while they practiced at Seddon Park here yesterday.

The other losers were Vadakkai Chandrasekhar, Workeri Raman and Kapil Dev.

The thief made off with their cash and dumped their empty wallets in the home side's dressing room, police said.

The players' losses will be made good by the New Zealand Cricket Council, a spokesman for the council said.

The thief also helped himself to the contents of the till in the pavilion bar.

Northern Districts first score Extras (lb-6 nb-5) 11
Innings K. Wealleans c More b Sharma 101
D. White b Venkateswamy Raju 55
C. Kuggeleijn c Chandrasekhar 24
G. Bradburn not out 67
M. Bailey lbw b Wasson 2
B. Young not out 0

Total (for five wickets) 268
To bat: B. Bracewell, D. Beard, S. Doull, P. Neutze.
Fall of wickets: 1-109 2-162 3-237, 4-262, 5-264.
Bowling: Wasson 19-2-61-2, Razdan 19-5-40-0, Venkateswamy Raju 33-9-70-2, Venkateswamy 16-3-65-0, Raman 3-0-14-0, Sharma 12-4-30-1.

"I've been working with Billy King on so many things," said Navratilova. "I worked on every facet of my game tonight I could, ground strokes, volleys, serves and footwork."

White admitted that she would not have bet against Navratilova coming into the match.

"I have to be a realist," said White smiling. "On my very best day and on Martina's worst, I couldn't beat her. She'd have to break her arm and default for me to have a chance."

Local teen Linda Harvey-Wild proved that her first round upset of French champion Arantxa Sanchez Vicario of Spain was no fluke by eliminating Australian Nicole Provis 6-4-6-4.

Harvey-Wild's will try to keep her upset string going when she takes on eighth-seeded fellow American Pam Shriver in the quarterfinals.

In another second round match, 25th-ranked Nathalie Tauziat of France pulled off a minor upset by ousting seventh seed Laura Gildemeister of Peru 6-1-6-7-5.

Navratilova returns a shot to White. (Reuters wirephoto)

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McEnroe, Lendl reach quarterfinals

TORONTO, Feb 16, (Reuters): Third seed John McEnroe did not appear happy on court but turned in a 6-4 6-3 victory over his friend Lefi Shiras to move into the quarterfinals of the \$1.2 million Skydome world Tennis Tournament yesterday.

World number one Ivan Lendl led seven of the top eight seeds into the quarters with his 7-5 6-2 win over McEnroe's US Open conqueror, Paul Haarhuis of the Netherlands.

The top-seeded Lendl will meet eighth-seeded American Kevin Curren in the quarterfinals. Curren won a difficult battle with Grant Connell, the last remaining Canadian in the draw, 7-6-2-6-1.

McEnroe, who said his shoulder was bothering him, had brief exchanges with a photographer and the umpire, but managed to get through his match without a major outburst.

"It's a little bit difficult to play a friend," said the fourth-ranked McEnroe. "I feel physically I'm playing sub-par and that might contribute to my being a little bit nasty."

The 95th-ranked Shiras surprised many by staying with McEnroe. He played steady tennis throughout and McEnroe was forced to fight hard for his victory.

In the quarterfinals McEnroe will meet fifth seed Jay Berger, who sent unseeded fellow American Richy Renberg packing 6-4 7-6.

Second seed Brad Gilbert has been somewhat ignored with Lendl and McEnroe grabbing



McEnroe slams ATP Tour chief

much of the Skydome spotlight, but the fifth-ranked American quietly moved into the quarterfinals with 6-2 6-2 victory over Czechoslovak giant Milan Srebrer.

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Unesco honours Fahd for service to sport

THE United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) has honoured Sheikh Fahd Al Ahmed with an award for his service to physical education and sport.

Sheikh Fahd, who is a member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), is also the vice-president of the Association of National Olympic Committees (ANOC) and chairman of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA). At the national level, Sheikh Fahd is also the chairman of the Kuwait Olympic Committee and the Kuwait

Football Association, besides being involved in several sports clubs and cultural societies.

Sheikh Fahd's hobbies include writing poetry in Arabic and horse breeding. A well-known figure in the world of sport, Sheikh Fahd has already received several awards and a citation from the United Nations organisation for his actions in the struggle against apartheid in sport. Sheikh Fahd's two sons have already followed in their father's footsteps by becoming sports administrators. The

Unesco award will be presented to Sheikh Fahd next October.

Sam Ramsamy, the chairman of the South Africa Non-racial Olympic Committee (San-roc) arrived yesterday in Kuwait to take part in the meetings of the IOC Apartheid and Olympic Commission. Ramsamy is a dedicated anti-apartheid campaigner and also adviser to the IOC commission. Ramsamy is expected to brief the IOC officials on the latest political developments in South Africa.

Judge Keba Mbaye, vice-president of the International Court of Justice and also vice-president of the International Olympic Committee arrived yesterday in Kuwait for a two-day visit.

Judge Keba Mbaye will be chairing the IOC Apartheid and Olympic Commission meeting scheduled for Monday. The Senegalese judge was co-opted in IOC in 1972 and was the secretary-general of the organising committee of the Friendship Games held in Dakar, Senegal in 1963.

LOCAL FOOTBALL

BMW in top gear

BMW Football Club finally found the form that has eluded them so far this season when they beat Bargain House 4-2 in the League Cup.

Captain Steve Kelly admitted to being "deliriously happy" with a convincing win over old rivals Bargain House. "We never stopped running and we put our chances away," BMW, showed great commitment and that was the main difference between the two teams.

The game started with BMW looking a little shaky which was hardly surprising considering the poor performance exhibited by BMW so far this season, and Bargain House punished poor marking when Alan Wild put them ahead after 20 minutes. BMW, now beginning to settle down particularly in midfield, replied immediately with Yoshiaki intercepting a poor throw by Bargain House keeper Ken Denedy, and thumping the ball home.

Easily the second half began with BMW chasing and harriving for everything, especially in midfield. Their just reward came when Danny Craft shot them into the lead. Bargain House were not prepared to give up so easily and drew level after pressurising Tony Edwards to pass back to his keeper, who misplacing his kick, hefted the ball (to his dismay) over keeper Jimmy Doyle's head.

The BMW midfield immediately rallied their team and were justly put in front with Yoshiaki making it 3-2. The match was finally put beyond the reach of Bargain House when Karl Royal irresponsibly losing the ball to BMW's Barry Crouch, who proceeded to spray the ball into the goal. The result was a 4-2 victory for BMW, who were delighted to see the team's first win of the season. So, finally, BMW register their intention to compete for League and Cup honours by winning the match 4-2. A hard fought game which was well controlled by officials from the Kuwait Indian Football Federation.

France name soccer team

PARIS, Feb 16, (Reuters): French team chief Michel Platini yesterday left out defender Francis Silvestre and midfielder Marcel Dib from the 18 players who toured Kuwait last month when he named his squad for the soccer friendly against West Germany in Montpellier on February 28.

Young defender Remy Garde of Lyon and winger Pascal Vahirua of Auxerre, who made their international debuts in Kuwait, are retained.

France are unbeaten for almost a year and have won their last four official matches under Platini, who sees West Germany as the sternest test so far to his promising young side.

Squad: Goalkeepers: Bruno Martini (Auxerre), Gilles Roussel (Sochaux). Defenders: Manuel Amoros (Marseille), Basile Boli (Auxerre), Bernard Casani (Toulon), Eric di Meo (Marseille), Remy Garde (Lyon), Franck Seuzee (Marseille). Midfielders: Laurent Blanc (Marseille), Didier Deschamps (Marseille), Jean-Marc Ferreri (Bordeaux), Bernard Pardo (Bordeaux). Forwards: Eric Cantona (Marseille), Jean-Pierre Papin (Marseille), Christian Perez (Paris St Germain), Pascal Vahirua (Auxerre).

Saudis opt out of Cup

Kuwait ready to host soccer tourney

NICOSIA, Feb 16, (Agencies): Saudi Arabia has withdrawn its team from the Gulf Cup soccer tournament in Kuwait citing "special circumstances" for its decision.

A statement by the official Saudi Press Agency gave no further details of the kingdom's withdrawal from the seven-nation



Sheikh Fahd Al Ahmed

tournament due to start on Tuesday.

"The Saudi Football Association regrets the Saudi team will not participate in the Gulf tournament in Kuwait," it said.

Meanwhile, the director of the organising committee, Mohammed Othman told Kuna yesterday that the committee had completed all preparations that would make the tournament a success.

Mohammed Othman affirmed that the championship's opening ceremony coincides with celebrations of the 29th anniversary of Kuwait's National Day will be patronised by HH the Amir.

The Amir will attend the inaugural ceremony, Othman said, emphasising that no matches are to be played on the opening day to reserve efforts "for making the inauguration an opportunity for Kuwaiti sportsmen and their guests from Arab Gulf countries to express happiness on the National Day."

15,500 school students will take part in the inaugural ceremony and perform an opera coupled with seven shows to be demonstrated through banners and portraits, telling past and present achievements of participant states.

The songs of the operetta were co-written by the president of the higher organising committee and chairman of Kuwait Football Association Sheikh Fahd Al Ahmed and Kuwaiti song-writer Abdul-Latif Al Bannay.

The operetta is to be performed by Kuwait's prominent singers Abdul Karim Abdul-Qadir and Abdullah Rewaished together with a schoolboys chorus as other

students are displaying colourful background-portraits that would concentrate on participant countries' folklore heritage, Mohammed Othman said.

In Amman, Sheikh Fahd, in a joint press conference with chairman of the International Olympic Committee Juan Antonio Samaranch held last night, said that although he would like to see Kuwait crowned champion of the tournament, his main goal is the success of the gathering.

On Saudi Arabia's sudden decision to withdraw from the tournament, he said that he heard the news, but had not been formally notified. He said he had tried to contact the Saudis to inquire about the reasons for the withdrawal.

Praising Arab trainers in various sports, Sheikh Fahd said that most Arab sports teams rely on foreign trainers due to the shortage of Arab coaches and also the high standard of foreign ones.

On a dispute inside the Kuwait Olympic Committee, he indicated that the issue was on whether to establish a higher council or a ministry of youth that takes care of sports affairs.

Sheikh Fahd also called on the Arab media to practice objectivity and constructive criticism.

Samaranch noted that the IOC was studying Palestine's bid to become a committee member and said that the decision would be made during the coming meeting in Tokyo.

Both Sheikh Fahd and Samaranch affirmed that the IOC will fight steroids use by athletes to boost their performance in competition.

Oldham hit Hammers for six

LONDON, Feb 16, (Reuters): Andy Ritchie propelled Oldham towards the English League Cup soccer final with two goals in a 6-0 semifinal first-leg drubbing of West Ham on Wednesday.

Ritchie maintained his record of scoring in every round, netting once each half as Oldham obliged manager Neil Adams in turning the second leg against fellow Second Division West Ham into a formality.

Oldham might easily have reached double figures as they made virtually certain of a final appointment against the winners of the clash between First Division rivals Tottenham Forest and Coventry. Holders Forest won their home leg 2-1 last Sunday.

Neil Adams opened Oldham's tally in the 11th minute and further goals by Ritchie and Earl Barrett gave the home side a 3-0 halftime edge on their artificial pitch. Ritchie, Roger Palmer and a second strike by Ritchie completed the rout.

Ritchie has so far succeeded in emulating manager Royle, the former England striker who scored in every round for Manchester City when they won the trophy in 1976.

In the First Division, a last-minute goal by Iain Dowie earned struggling Luton a 2-1 win at Wimbledon.

Luton moved up one place to two from the foot of the table ahead of Millwall and trailblazers Charlton after their victory. Wimbledon's Dennis Wise had earlier equalised Welsh international Kurt Nogan's

opening strike for Luton.

The crowd — 3,496 — was the lowest First Division attendance since World War II, fewer than the previous figure of 4,026 who watched Wimbledon's home game against Norwich in December 1987.

Holders Liverpool host the only all-First Division match in the fifth round of the Football Association (FA) Cup tomorrow but it is last year's losing finalists Everton who face the more awesome tie.

While League leaders Liverpool play Southampton, beaten 2-1 by Crystal Palace in the League at the weekend, their City rivals travel to Second Division Oldham, who have not lost on their artificial pitch for 32 games.

"I wouldn't think they will rely on coming here," West Ham manager Lou Macari said about Everton's chances after the match.

Southern's 35-year-old midfielder Jimmy Case is fighting to recover from a knee injury sustained at the weekend in time for the match against his former employers.

"I would play with a broken leg if I had to. This is one match I do not want to miss," he said. "At my age you never know if it is going to be your last to Anfield."

The other First Division ties tomorrow have second-placed Aston Villa away to Second Division neighbours West Bromwich Albion and Crystal Palace at home to Fourth Division Rochdale, enjoying their best ever Cup run.

Troubled Manchester United travel to Second Division Newcastle on Sunday in what could be a giant-killing encounter while Third Division Blackpool also have a chance to cause an upset when they host Queens Park Rangers.

Having played all their games at home against lowly opponents to reach the fifth round of the Cup for the first time in 31 years, relegation-threatened Blackpool will have a capacity crowd of 9,000 cheering them on.

"Everyone would expect us to be underdogs because we are against First Division opposition but this is a one-off in the Cup when anything can happen," said manager Jimmy Mullin.

"There are a lot of star players in the QPR team but nobody here is overawed by the opposition," he said, despite Rangers' not conceding a goal so far in four FA Cup ties.

Oldham's plastic pitch has often been blamed for their guests' poor performance but Macari refused to use the excuse.

"If we had trained on that for three weeks it would have made no difference. They caught Arsenal and Southampton here as well; it was so one-sided it was unbelievable," he said.

Oldham humiliated League champions Arsenal 3-1 in the fourth round of the League Cup last November while high-flying Southampton fell 2-0 in their League Cup quarterfinal replay.

Faldo seeks Norman's No. 1 title

MELBOURNE, Feb 16, (Reuters): Britain's Nick Faldo could snatch Australian Greg Norman's title of world's number one golfer over the weekend after the pair finished level at 11-under-par to lead the Australian Masters today.

Faldo, the US Masters champion, sank a birdie on the last hole of the second round to end with a six-under-par 67, the same score as Norman, the defending champion.

The pair hold a two-shot lead over three Australians, Ian Baker-Finch, winner here in 1988, Jeff Woodland and Steven Bann.

Faldo could take over from Norman as world number one if he wins and the Australian finishes out of the top 20. While this is unlikely, the duel over the Huntingdale course should be a fascinating affair.

Faldo said the Masters should not be regarded as a two-horse race. "There are a lot of guys there and we're only halfway through. You have to keep the momentum going and not worry about any particular guy until you get to the crunch on Sunday."

Faldo and Norman, who shot 68s in the first round, were among eight golfers who started four shots behind overnight leader Mike Clayton of Australia.

Clayton finished three strokes off the lead, after a double bogey at the 13th hole contributed to a 74.

Norman notched three birdies in the first seven holes, putting beautifully throughout his round played in hot, windy conditions. He dropped only one shot with a bogey five on the ninth.



Malaga's Merino (left) tries to block a shot from Cadiz's Canillas. (Reuters wirephoto)



Real's Bernd Schuster (right) avoids a sliding tackle from Barcelona's Bakero. (Reuters wirephoto)

Real edge Barcelona

MADRID, Feb 16, (Reuters): Barcelona coach Cruyff and two of his players were sent off in an explosive climax to their Spanish Soccer League match against arch-rivals Real Madrid yesterday.

The dismissals came at the end of an incident-packed clash which defending champions Real won 3-2 at their Santiago Bernabeu stadium to go six points clear of second-placed Atletico Madrid.

In the space of three minutes, Barcelona's Dutch international Ronald Koeman was sent off for kicking Paco Llorente and Elosio Pires was expelled for headbutting Martin Vazquez.

Dutchman Cruyff dashed on to the pitch to protest at the red card against Koeman and earned the same punishment for refusing to leave the pitch. He was eventually escorted from the touching by police.

Barcelona, now nine points behind the leaders, trailed after 25 minutes when Michel Gonzalez ham-

pered a left-foot shot past Spain's World Cup goal-keeper Andoni Zubizarreta.

Urged on by their fans in a crowd of 92,000, Real extended the lead from a penalty awarded 10 minutes later when Elosio floored Emilio Butragueno. Mexican striker Hugo Sanchez took the spot kick which Zubizarreta managed to hit out but Butragueno smashed home the rebound.

One minute after halftime Sanchez notched his 25th goal of the season for Real, putting them 3-0 ahead with a penalty that followed a foul on Butragueno by Zubizarreta.

Apart from the ugly closing incidents, the match produced a flutter of yellow cards, meaning Barcelona will be without Jose Bakero and Elosio against Rayo Vallecano on Sunday while Real will not have Manolo Sanchis for the away game against Malaga, who defeated Cadiz 1-0 on Wednesday.

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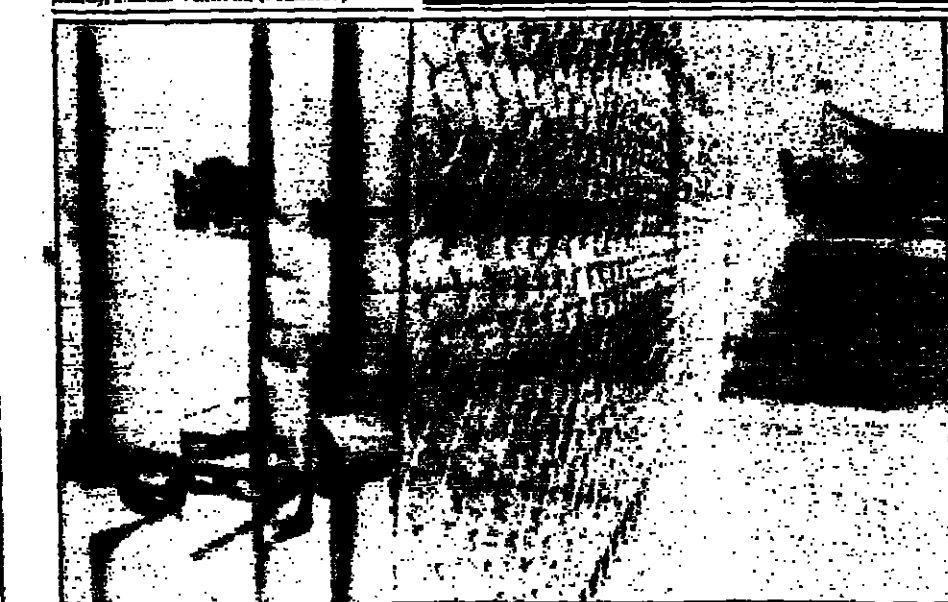
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Spring training

A padlock prevents entry to the baseball players parking area at the New York Mets' spring training stadium in Port St. Louis, Florida, on Thursday. Spring training was postponed after a pay dispute between players and owners of the American baseball clubs. (Reuters wirephoto)



Swimming pool

Sixty-year-old swimming pool at the Montjuic Park in Barcelona goes down to make room for a new competition swimming pool to be used during the 1992 Summer Olympics. The new swimming pool will host some of the water polo games and diving events. (Reuters wirephoto)

Top E. Germans on drugs since mid '70s, say scientists

EAST BERLIN, Feb 16, (Reuters): Doping has been commonplace in some areas of East German sport for at least 15 years, two East German sports scientists said yesterday.

"It is true that top athletes in power sports have been doping here to boost their training for years. It all started in the mid-1970s," said professor Hermann

Buhl from East Germany's leading sports medicine centre in Leipzig.

"Athletes have mainly taken drugs such as anabolic steroids during training. It has been carefully controlled. Coaches and doctors have known all about it. Some athletes have been forced to take the drugs," Buhl told Reuters.

Allegations that drugs have been

behind East Germany's remarkable success story in Olympic sport have been made before by East German athletes who defected to the West before hardline communist rule collapsed last year.

The state's top athletes and officials have vehemently denied the claims.

But Buhl's remarks, backed up by a co-founder of the Leipzig Medical Centre,

professor Lothar Pickenhain, are the first allegations of widespread drug abuse to be made by East German sports officials still living in the country.

Buhl works with a team of scientists who research the pressure put on athletes' bodies during training. They have discovered when the human body is best placed to receive medical support.

He said the centre's research helped advise coaches and athletes but the scientists were never involved themselves in the administration of drugs or any medicine.

Pickenhain, who left the Leipzig centre in 1979, said talks with athletes and coaches had convinced him many stars in sports like athletics and swimming were on drugs.

"The majority are doped. I'm convinced of that," Pickenhain told Reuters.

"Much went on only during training, not before big events. The Leipzig lab was secret before and we couldn't talk publicly about doping. Now we can."

He added: "It has always been obvious that some athletes took drugs. You only had to look at the large bodies of some of

the women to realise they had taken steroids. Some of them had very low voices too."

East Germany has risen to prominence as one of the Olympic superpowers in the last 20 years. At the 1988 Seoul Games it won the second highest number of gold medals behind the Soviet Union.

SPORTS BRIEFS

Two-way tie

LA JOLLA, Calif., Feb 16, (Reuters): Bob Eastwood and Rick Fehr each posted seven-under-par 65s yesterday to share the first round lead at the \$900,000 San Diego Open golf tournament.

Atlantic Open

OPORTO, Portugal, Feb 16, (Reuters): Eamonn Darcy, chasing his first European Tour victory since the 1987 Belgian Open, led with a six under par 66 after the first round of the Atlantic Open yesterday.

Emirates golf

DUBAI: Nick Faldo, aiming to establish himself this year as the world's top golfer, has given the perfect finishing touch to the star-studded line-up for the Emirates Airline Desert Classic. Faldo confirmed his place in the tournament from Melbourne where he is currently attempting to add the Australian Masters title to the US and British Masters crowns he won last year.

Sevilla midfielder

MADRID, Feb 16, (Reuters): Unscathed Sevilla midfielder Rafael Paz was called up by Spain yesterday for a World Cup soccer warm-up friendly against Czechoslovakia on Wednesday in Alicante.

Live coverage

ANKARA, Feb 16, (Reuters): Turkey's leading soccer clubs are barring live coverage of their games because they consider the \$42,000 a match paid by state-run radio and television is too low.

Bruno honoured

LONDON, Feb 16, (AP): Frank Bruno, the heavyweight boxer whose image as a gentle giant has been enhanced by his appearance in a children's show, was inducted yesterday as a Member of the Order of the British Empire — one of the nation's top civilian honours.

Bretton dies

PARIS, Feb 16, (Reuters): Jean Bretton, one of the most famous managers in French boxing who was known to his fighters as "Monsieur Jean", died on Wednesday at the age of 80, sources close to his family said.

Scoring streak

NEW YORK, Feb 16, (Reuters): The remarkable scoring streak of Pittsburgh Penguins' star centre Mario Lemieux was halted at 46 games on Wednesday after he failed to come up with a point against the New York Rangers.

Chinese players

BEIJING, Feb 16, (Reuters): China has imposed new rules to restrict star table tennis players from leaving the country and joining foreign clubs, a sports official said yesterday. Under the recently introduced rules, only men over the age of 28 and women over 25 will be allowed foreign transfers, an official in the Chinese sports commission said.

Dutch Cup

AMSTERDAM, Feb 16, (Reuters): Ajax, whose match was marred by on-pitch violence and two sendings off, and PSV Eindhoven reached the Dutch Cup soccer semifinals in contrasting manner on Wednesday. PSV romped to a 4-0 home quarterfinal win over Emmen while Ajax scraped through 1-0 away to Fortuna Sittard.

Spain stun England

Argentina hold Netherlands

LAHORE, Pakistan, Feb 16, (Reuters): Ignacio Escude scored, a hat-trick to earn Spain a shock 4-1 victory over England in the World Cup hockey tournament yesterday.

In yesterday's only other game, France beat India 2-1 with a late goal by Christian Viala to give them their first win against former World Cup winners for 25 years.

India's defeat leaves them with one point from three games in Group A and they look likely to finish out of the top eight for the second successive World Cup.

England's defeat after two previous victories leaves them in third place behind West Germany and Pakistan in Group B, the two teams they have still to meet.

After reaching the final of the last World Cup they are now in danger of failing to make the semifinals.

Spain, who had lost their previous two matches, were drawing 1-1 at halftime after England's Sean Kerly equalised Pablo Uco's opening goal.

But Escude, who recently played his 100th international, converted three successive penalty corners between the 42nd and 65th minute.

India took an early lead against France through wing

Thobias Singh in the 12th minute. After French captain Martin Catonnet equalised with a 23rd minute penalty conversion, India had a chance to go ahead again but goalkeeper Pascal Florin saved a penalty from Ajit Lakra.

Viala gave France victory four minutes from time with the sim-



Boveland: scored two for the Dutch

plest of chances set up by Tim Delaunay.

West Germany, Australia and Pakistan today scored their third successive victories to maintain their dominance today.

West Germany recorded their biggest win in the Cup when they beat Ireland 4-0 but were joined at the top of Group B by Pakistan who beat Canada 1-0.

Australia cruised to a comfortable 3-0 win over the Soviet

Union, to give them maximum six points and tighten their grip on Group A. The Soviet Union, with one point, are at the bottom. Australia once again did well with their penalty corners. Michael York scoring in the fifth minute and Greg Corbett in the 60th. In between Neil Hawgood netted an opportunistic goal in the 52nd.

The Germans were not on their best form but still good

enough to outclass Ireland and maintain a perfect record of 17 wins in 17 encounters.

Outstanding German forward Stefan Blocher forced and converted a 10th minute penalty stroke and scored West Germany's fourth and last goal with a typical burst through the middle of the Irish defence in the 56th minute.

Netherlands dropped a point today when they were held to a 3-3 draw by Argentina. Floris-Jan Boveland put the Dutch ahead in the 5th minute of the first half but the Argentines levelled the match in the 33rd minute through Carlos Geneyro. The half-time score remained 1-1.

Marc Delissen made it 2-1 for the Dutch in the first half and Boveland added to the score two minutes later. The Argentines however fought back brilliantly.

Fernando Ferrara pulled one back for Argentina in the 57th minute and Alejandro Doherty got the equaliser in the last minute of the match. Argentina still have only three points from their three games while the Dutch have five.

Standings

(absolute under played, won, drawn, lost, for, against, points)

Group A						
Australia	3	3	0	0	10	2
Netherlands	3	2	1	0	10	6
Argentina	3	1	1	1	9	10
France	3	1	0	2	4	6
India	3	0	1	2	5	8
Soviet Union	3	0	1	2	3	9

Group B						
W Germany	3	3	0	0	10	1
Pakistan	3	3	0	0	9	4
England	3	2	0	1	5	4

Senna gets super-licence

PARIS, Feb 16, (Reuters): Ayrton Senna of Brazil will take part in the 1990 Formula One world motor racing championship, the International Motor Sports Federation (Fisa) announced today.

Fisa's announcement followed an earlier statement that the name of the McLaren former world champion did not appear on the list of 35 drivers for the championship published by Fisa.

The list named Austrian Gerhard Berger and Briton Jonathan Palmer as the two McLaren drivers for 1990.

Fisa subsequently withdrew the statement pending a new communiqué.

And Fisa have now corrected the earlier statement and announced Senna will team up with Berger as planned for McLaren in the forthcoming season.

"The Fisa confirms that it has issued Ayrton Senna with a super-licence to enable him to compete in the 1990 World Championship," a communiqué from Fisa said.

Along with the communiqué, Fisa published a letter from Senna in which the 1988 world champion

declared that last year's championship appeared not to have been rigged.

"During the meeting of the Fisa World Council which took place on Dec 7, 1989, I listened to statements and testimonies from various people and from these statements one must conclude that they provide proof that no pressure group or the president of the Fisa influenced the decisions regarding the results of the 1989 Formula One World Championship."

Fisa president Jean-Marie Balestre said last month Senna would not be granted his super-licence to compete unless he withdrew allegations that last year's championship had been manipulated to favour then team mate Alain Prost of France.

Senna made the allegations after last October's Japanese Grand Prix in Suzuka from which he was disqualified and later fined \$100,000 for dangerous driving following a crash which put Prost, who was leading at the time, out of the race.

The decision meant a third world title for the Frenchman.

Vicini picks young team

ROME, Feb 16, (Reuters): World Cup hosts Italy, aiming to wipe out bad memories of recent friendlies, today named a young team spearheaded by Napoli striker Andrea Carnevale for next week's game against the Netherlands in Rotterdam.

But manager Azzegio Vicini, who has promised "an aggressive, fast, brilliant Italy" by the June finals, has injury problems and may have to wait a while longer to see his dream fulfilled.

Wednesday's match follows a string of disappointing friendlies against Brazil, England, Algeria and World Cup holders Argentina late last year that saw Italy score only once — a goal against the Algerians widely regarded as offside.

Gianluca Vialli, the gifted Sampdoria striker Vicini is counting on to score Italy's goals, has a broken foot.

Internazionale's 26-year-old defender Riccardo Ferri, another key component of Italy's expected World Cup squad, is recovering from a shoulder injury.



Title fight

Five-time world boxing champion Thomas Hearns (left) and Michael Olajide (right) pose for photographers at a press conference in New York. Hearns and Olajide will fight for the World Boxing Organisation's super middleweight title on April 28. (Reuters wirephoto)

Adams triumphs twice

MAGED ADAMS took the honours in the Invitation Tennis Tournament, held yesterday by the Mesilah Beach Hotel (managed by Kuwait Hotels Co.) to inaugurate its new tennis courts. The courts were opened under the patronage of Sheikh Jaber Al Abdullah, governor of the Capital, by Sheikh Ahmed Al Jaber.

Adams first partnered Waleed Saleh to victory in the men's doubles and then joined Anna Strakos to take the mixed doubles title.

Top dignitaries, executives from the National Bank of Kuwait and Kuwait Hotel Company were present at the inauguration.

The event was held in co-operation with the National Bank of Kuwait and under the supervision of the Kuwait Tennis Federation. Four ambassadors (of Thailand, Federal Republic of Germany, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia) and a number of top players from Kuwait took part in event in which competition was only held for the men's doubles and mixed doubles.

It was a family fun day and the event was held in a relaxed spirit and snacks were distributed freely to the spectators and participants — courtesy of KDD, Beduin Centre, Kuwait International Hotel, Coca Cola, Jashammal & Partners and Mickey Chips.

At the end of the day, prizes and appreciation plaques were presented to ambassadors and companies for their continuous support of the Mesilah Beach Hotel activities.



Strakos receives her prize.



Some of the spectators watching the proceedings.

Holyfield ready to fight new world champion

NEW YORK, Feb 16, (Reuters): Evander Holyfield, number one contender for the world heavyweight boxing title, is ready to fight newly-crowned champion James "Buster" Douglas despite demands by dejected Mike Tyson for a rematch, his manager said yesterday.

Holyfield had been prepared to step aside to allow a Tyson-Douglas rematch in June under an agreement promising him a fight with the winner, but the Douglas camp has since said that the new champion might not fight again until September.

Holyfield's manager Dan Duva said in a statement that a delay in the next Douglas fight had altered the picture and Holyfield was now ready to face the champion within 120 days, as ordered by the World Boxing Association.

"Evander Holyfield has been the number one heavyweight contender for over a year now," Duva said. "He was good enough to step aside and allow Tyson to fight Douglas last week, with the agreement he would fight the winner. He even considered allowing them to fight again in June before getting his shot."

"But if Douglas wants to wait until September to fight again, then Holyfield has no choice but to assert his rights as the number one contender and demand his shot at the title next, within the time frame set by the WBA."

Lakers sail past Kings

SACRAMENTO, California, Feb 16, (AP): James Worthy scored 20 points as Los Angeles beat Sacramento for the eighth consecutive time.

Wayman Tisdale scored 23 points for Sacramento and Antoine Carr added 17 in his debut for the Kings, who acquired him from Atlanta on Tuesday. Carr scored nine points in the final three minutes as the Kings tried futilely to come back from a 14-point deficit.

Byron Scott and Magic Johnson had 17 points each for the Lakers, who are now a full game ahead of Portland in the Pacific division.

Warriors 113, Bulls 107. Tim Hardaway scored 24 points and Chris Mullin added 23 as Golden State defeated Washington for a franchise-record 15th consecutive home victory.

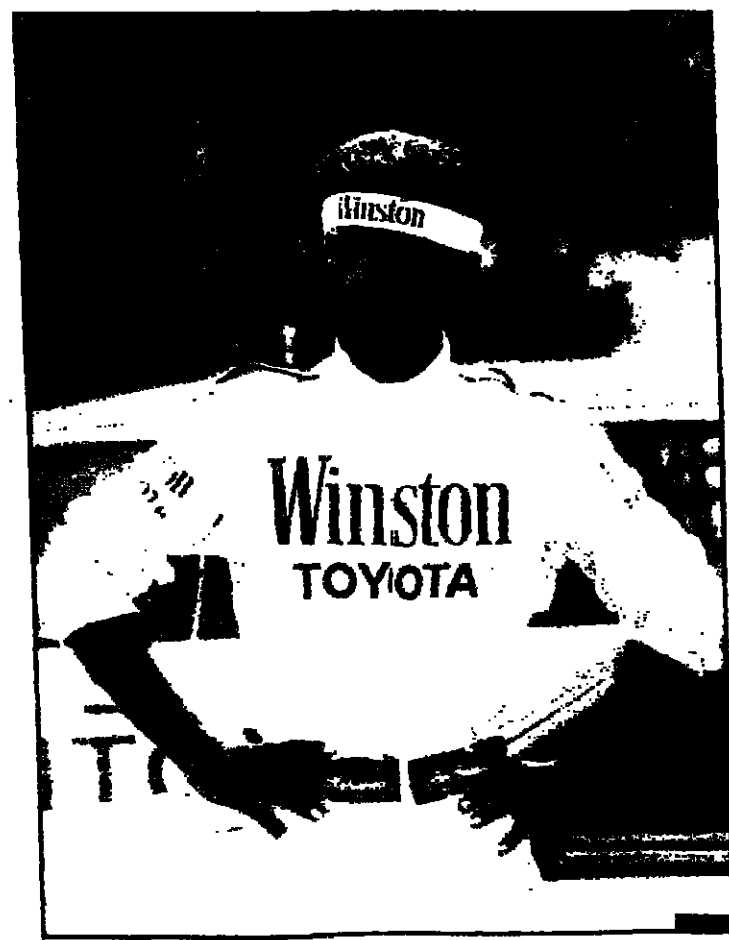
Results		
Atlanta	130	Orlando 123
Seattle	103	New Jersey 92
Houston	124	New York 105
Golden State	113	Washington 107
L.A. Lakers	101	Sacramento 92

Speedbird Trophies

GREAT BRITAIN will play Pakistan in the second of the British Airways-sponsored Speedbird Trophies to be played this season. The match will take place on February 25, Kuwait National Day, at the KOC Grounds, Ahmadi. Play will start at 9.30 am and continue for a scheduled 45 overs per innings.

Over the past few years the Pakistan team have held the edge in the encounters. Their strength has come from some very powerful batting. However, the Great Britain team is still smarting from the defeat imposed on them by India in December and will not want a repeat.

As usual British Airways, through the Marketing Manager, Trevor Owen, will be providing prizes to the winning team and awards for the Men of the Match.



Bin Sulayem: scores easy victory

DOHA: Middle East champion Mohammed bin Sulayem made a perfect start to the 1990 FISA regional series yesterday when he drove his Winston Toyota Celica GT-4 to a hard-earned but convincing victory in the NBK Qatar International Rally.

Partnered by experienced Irish co-driver Ronan Morgan, the UAE star produced a flawless performance on the second day of the punishing 687-km event to finish almost five minutes ahead of Lebanon's Michel Saleh in his Group B Audi Quattro.

Third in a Range Rover more than 23 minutes behind Saleh was Qatar's Sultan Al Sowaidi, followed closely by Oman's Tony Georgiou in his Mitsubishi Galant. Out of 31 starters there were only 11 finishers.

"I am delighted to have won such a difficult event," said Sulayem as he celebrated the 17th international win of his career at the finish at Doha's Ramada Hotel. "I said before the start that Michel would be the most difficult man to beat, and that's exactly how it turned out."

"We had quite a few problems with the suspension and front differential today, but they were quickly fixed by the mechanics who were fantastic. I couldn't have won without the backing of such a great team."

The rally became a personal duel between Sulayem and Saleh following the exit of the UAE's reigning Masafi 4WD champion, Suhail Khalifa, on stage 14. Khalifa, battling to close up on the front two, crashed out of the rally when his Mitsubishi Galant VR4 broke its front left strut and was unable to continue. Saleh made a determined effort to catch Sulayem. "At times we were hitting 200 kph on the rocky straights," said co-driver, Tom Smith. "I've never been in a car that could move so quickly. It was a new experience for me."

But Sulayem, who had begun the second day leading Saleh by one minute and 42 seconds, gradually increased his advantage as the rally wound its way over some of Qatar's roughest terrain.

"With all our problems, we didn't have time to worry about anyone else," said the Winston Toyota star. "The stages were tough, the car had problems and we lost a lot of time. But we still won the rally and that's the main thing."

Provisional results: 1. M. bin Sulayem (UAE)/R. Morgan (Ire) Winston Toyota Celica GT-4, 3 hrs 14 mins 27 secs; 2. M. Saleh (Leb)/T. Smith (UAE) Audi Quattro, 3:19:17; 3. S. Al Sowaidi/H. Al Marri (Qat) Range Rover, 3:43:07; 4. T. Georgiou/T. Steele (Oman) Mitsubishi Galant, 3:44:25; 5. M. Al Mannai/M. Al Mannai (Qat) Range Rover, 3:57:42.